THE WHITE DEVIL
of THE BLACK SEA

THE WHITE DEVIL *of* THE BLACK SEA

BY

LEWIS STANTON PALEN

COLLABORATOR ON

"Beasts, Men and Gods" and "Man and Mystery in Asia"

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FOREWORD

WHEN it happens in our more or less prosaic times that one appears among us with some of the leading characteristics of Robin Hood, Don Quixote, and Captain Kidd rolled into one composite personality, it is legitimate to slip back into the age of story telling and sing some of the deeds of so anachronistic a soul.

Like the Knight of Sherwood Forest he fought for his sovereign while his sovereign was away and had the five chief leaders of his sovereign's enemies within a few hours of death, from which only a fortuitous and unforeseeable event saved them; like Cervantes' hero he tilted at windmills but with hand grenades instead of lances for the fray; and like the bold pirate he commandeered ships with which he ran down and captured others whom he wanted.

To escape from an argument along the lines of present day thought he has admitted himself that he is a creature of another age and that the latest possible period in which his personality would have fitted was the time of Napoleon.

His enemies have helped to draw attention to his story by giving him the name of "The White Devil,"

which the officers of the British Fleet operating out of Constantinople in 1918 and 1919 rounded out for us to "The White Devil of the Black Sea."

Courage, sheer and undaunted, always draws its meed of praise. During the War there were so many striking instances of bravery that it will stand as one of the great tragedies of all time that the results of the War have not been more worthy of the measureless sacrifices and deeds of heroism it called forth.

When to this knightly trait is added an indescribable something which, for want of a better and more worthy term, we must label "devilishness," these qualities raise their possessor up out of the ranks of the unusual into the realm of the unique.

I first heard of The White Devil from his mother, who had been a Maid of Honour at the Russian Court during the reigns of Alexander II and Alexander III and was married from the Court during the latter's reign. For over two years after she saw her son early one winter morning walk out into the snow with his wife, who was a Princess of one of the leading families among the Russian nobility, she never knew where these two outcasts disguised as peasants were or even whether they were still alive, until someone brought her word that they had turned up in the Black Sea and that he was known there by this sobriquet.

Another three years elapsed and I met her in Europe, whither this son had invited her to come and share the home where he worked as a carpenter and his wife as a masseuse.

It was there among his saws and planes that I first heard the rough outline of his tale and proposed to him that we write it down. His answer was characteristic and more or less an epitome of his whole career. No, he wouldn't write it down; for he never could sit quiet at a desk long enough to make whole pages of manuscript. That was quite out of his realm. As we chatted on and I sketched for him the possibility of making a book that might win the heart and mind of the public sufficiently to lift him and his family out of the drudgery and want into which the flood of Bolshevism had swept them, he thought it a rosy dream but something that could only be taken advantage of by "indoor folks" and as much as made clear that writing was still a business to be left to clerks and priests, as it had been during the Middle Ages.

The thought, however, of being able to relieve his wife of her part of the drudgery and of having once more some of the things which money can buy began to ferment in his mind and he finally announced that he would tell the story to his mother bit by bit and that she could write it down. The next time we met he had decided that most of the material was too

masculine to be properly handled by any woman, however intimately she may have known through hard experiences something comparable with the life he had led, and that he must therefore write himself for short intervals at a time, that is, so much as he could stand of such a form of work. The next report I had from him helps round out the indication of his character and was:

"If I do a thing at all, I must put all I've got into it and so have started working ten or twelve hours a day until I finish the job."

In this way he did "finish the job" and feels, I know, that he has made some great sacrifice, if not to principle, at least to that more vigorous and active self which never before has been so continuously and consistently harnessed or confined. What were discussed at first as simply his "notes" for the story have become practically the unaltered text of it, for they were set down in such a clear and straightforward style that I have endeavoured to preserve in the English phrasing as nearly as possible the exact form and wording of his original Russian, only omitting here and there passages which seemed to me less vital or interesting and asking him in others to develop the details more at length, as he had previously given me the story in verbal form.

In order that the narrative may be as direct and simple as possible I have left it entirely in the first

person, even though his name is nowhere mentioned in the volume.

If in places you find our hero seemingly devoid of all semblance of precaution in his dealings with the sworn enemies of himself and his class, or if you find at times his narrative smacks a bit of bravado, remember that caution and modesty are not essential in the character equipment of a daredevil and that their possession by our subject might as readily have carried him beneath the eternal sod, leaving us with no story save the short one on his tombstone.

Perhaps it were better that the reader should here turn to Chapter One and go through The White Devil's own story before reading the following paragraphs which attempt to give a short résumé of what his earlier life and previous military experiences had been, for then this sketch of his former years will take on a greater interest and will help to answer many of the questions which must arise as to what possible conditions of youth could have produced such a temperament and character as is revealed in the entirely unusual and incredible experiences he relates. His earlier life story, as he outlined it to me, runs somewhat as follows:

After a happy childhood passed largely in those princely surroundings of a great country estate in Russia, he entered the Pages' Corps of His Majesty

Nicolas II in 1900 at the age of eleven. Of his years there in the Pages' School he admits that he had very little spare time for his studies and was chiefly occupied with all sorts of nonsense and tricks. This brought him regularly into difficulties with his parents at home over his bad marks and with his teachers at school over his outrageous pranks. On the other hand he always found time for anything like military exercises, gymnastics, riding, and carpentering, all of which appealed to him strongly; and in these lines of sport and games he seems always to have been an acknowledged leader among his fellow students.

Also he was very fond of singing and early in his school days formed from among the best voices a chorus which he trained himself at every clandestine opportunity. As such a pastime could not well be hidden from the masters, it happened that instead of the usual chastisement for this extra curriculum activity, they commended him and entrusted to him the organisation of a regular school chorus which might take part in the yearly concerts given by the School of Pages on the anniversary of its foundation, December 12.

On the first of these occasions his chorus had to perform in the presence of the Czar and other members of the royal family. For a boy of his years it was naturally one of the most thrilling

moments of his life when the Czar asked that the singing be continued after his chorus had already rendered several of the old Russian songs, and later at the end of the concert summoned this boy to him to thank him personally for the music and to express the hope that it would not be the last time he should hear them sing.

When the time came for the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the school, December 12, 1902, it was a particularly momentous and difficult crisis for this amateur conductor, inasmuch as not only the Imperial Russian family were to be present but also a number of foreign royal princes and, in honour of such guests, artists from the Imperial Opera; a number of officers of the Guard Regiment, all former pages, were brought in to support the youthful voices. It was a wonderful night for a lad of fourteen to be conducting a chorus of over one hundred voices in the presence of royalty. But Disaster followed quick on the heels of Triumph! To give it in his own words:

"Thank Heaven, all went smoothly and, when the Czar had commended me for the fine execution of the choruses, I was so crazy with delight that when I met the German teacher passing down one of the dark corridors of the building, I couldn't keep my hands from stripping him of his frock coat and hiding it—for which disregard of dignity and au-

thority I was immediately placed in the school lockup."

Fortunately the Czar came to know of the incident and requested that the young conductor be released as a favour to him.

After these successes he became more and more devoted to vocal music and worked consistently over it, especially taking keen pleasure in the formation and training of choruses among the people on the great estate where the family always spent their summers.

And here, though it does not directly concern The White Devil's career, I cannot refrain from repeating the tale he once told me of how these lands came into the possession of his ancestors, for it carries one back into the vast age of grandeur which the necessities of our present industrialised and organised life have pressed back into the realm of the ne'er returnable. It was in the reign of the first of the Romanoffs that the ancestor of The White Devil received from his Czar a vast grant of lands on the edge of the steppes southeast of the Urals and thus founded a great estate. One of his descendants subsequently added to this an area slightly greater than the Imperial grant by purchasing from the Bashkirs in a novel manner. He ascended a hill in the tract they were considering and said simply:

"I take all the lands that my eye from here can cover."

The horizon for one's boundary! As was the forebear, so in many ways is the offspring—ready to attempt practically anything his eye can compass. You naturally ask, what became of all these lands? After a time it was found the estate was too large to administer effectively and so great sections were disposed of at various times until, within the last generation, it had dwindled to somewhere around 225,000 acres and is now only some seventy odd thousand.

It was over these lands and the neighbouring prairies that The White Devil developed his strongest passion for horses and riding. Brought up since a mere boy by Cossack mountaineer body servants who were all marvellous horsemen, he became so devoted to the riding of the steppes that he spent much of his summer holidays in visiting the nomad Kirghiz and Tartar tribes, where he would often catch with a lasso a wild horse from one of the herds and saddle and break it as his most thrilling and delightful pastime. As good a rider as he must have been, he, however, paid toll at different times with two broken arms and two broken legs, but with it all became so thoroughly wrapt up in his riding and training that he not only followed closely the life of the plains but devoted himself for three years

to a special course under the finest master his country afforded. He never tires of telling how his father, who was a Russian Colonel and later Equerry to the Czar, used to send him into the steppes to buy and bring home a herd of two or three hundred Kirghiz horses for him to select and train the best for sale to the horse lovers of St. Petersburg and Moscow.

As though to try him out in every way, Fate visited him with constant physical injuries. At different times in sport and escapades his right leg was once more broken and his skull was cracked before he entered the more serious period of the wounds received during the war against Germany.

Back in 1907 he joined the Chevalier Guard Regiment of Her Majesty the Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna as a private volunteer. For him the most interesting part of the service with such a cavalry regiment was naturally the summer camp where the annual army manœuvres also took place and it was during one of these that his horse, galloping in one of the leading squads of the regiment, put its foot in a hole and fell. When the rest of the regiment had galloped over and the dust cleared it was found that this time the left leg was again broken and his mount had also a fractured leg. Later, The White Devil retired from the regiment and occupied himself for a time with breeding and raising horses. Three years later, in 1912, he ex-

plored a large section of Siberia in a motor car with a view to choosing the best site for a tract for breeding horses for the army and for general sale. The year 1913 saw him back in Russia and the following year he was once more in his regiment crossing the Austrian frontier.

His military career was diverse and trying. In August, 1914, he received the St. George's Cross for blowing up a railway station in the enemy's rear, followed by a second citation and award two days later for gallantry in a bayonet charge during which he was wounded. Six days afterwards he was promoted to the rank of adjutant and a week later, when the regiment was sent to rest in the rear, he discovered that he had received a flesh wound some time during the fighting of the last few days but had been so occupied and dead from fatigue that he had not previously noticed his shoulder was shot through. A fortnight later this wound sent him back for a two months' stay in hospital in Petrograd. In February of 1915 he was again wounded with a shell splinter in the side and a bullet in the lung. This meant hospital again until July, when he returned to his regiment and was promoted to the rank of Second Lieutenant. In August, while driving a motor car with a trained nurse and a party of staff officers, he had seven ribs broken and all the muscles torn from his left breast. Following this he was again evacu-

ated to Petrograd and retired from the army. By June of 1916 he had recovered sufficiently to enlist in the Motor Transport Company of the Headquarters of the Ninth Army and was appointed Commanding Officer of the Technical Department. While he was cutting off an electric current in a newly occupied Austrian trench during the month following, he was partially buried by the explosion of an Austrian shell and had his nose broken by a falling beam. His promotion to Captain followed. Incredible as it may seem, even for this nine-lived hero of ours, it was the same month that the motor car he was driving was overturned by the explosion of a shell and he was getting away all right until some inconsiderate Austrian soldier shot him through the lung with a rifle bullet. It seems his broken nose did not keep him out of action for the month and I never have been told whether the pierced lung did or not. At any rate his additional service before January, 1917, won for him the rank of Major and left him among that tragic body of Russian Officers who did what they could to fight the battle of the Allies until the Revolution and Kerenski's "Order Number One" began the "shooting from behind," which made of these men during the following days of Bolshevism simply hunted animals.

But if you would see how one of these stood con-

stantly at bay and took an enormous toll from the pursuers of his class, read the simple tale he tells in these following pages and wonder what combination of stars ushered him into this world.

LEWIS STANTON PALEN.

BOUVERET
Switzerland
7 September, 1923

THE WHITE DEVIL OF THE BLACK SEA

CHAPTER I

FROM KIEFF TO THE URALS

EARLY in 1917 I was convalescing in Kieff, slowly recovering from the various wounds and fractures received at the front, and had a desolate feeling in my heart as I heard all the rumours of a coming revolution. A cold terror crept over us all at the news of the events which took place at the end of February in Petrograd, culminating in the overwhelming report of the abdication of the Tsar, which plunged us into deep despair.

I realised from the first that among the members of the Provisional Government there was no one of sufficient moral integrity and strength to carry on; and, consequently, as the long existent propaganda had been persistently directed against the war, it was evident that for us the war had come to an end, to a disgraceful end, dishonourable toward the Allies.

Close upon the first events of the Revolution, the Provisional Government published the now famous Army order, known as "Order Number One," by

which all discipline at the front was shattered and power taken away from the officers commanding and bestowed upon the ignorant mass of soldiers, corrupted and demoralised by groups of communists and socialists who tried to persuade the soldiers to leave the front and to murder their officers, who would naturally not participate in the vile treachery of desertion.

Moreover, the soldiers were assured that henceforth everything belonged to them, and that any one who possessed property was liable to have it confiscated or merely disposed of by the people. If the owner protested, he could be killed as a counter-revolutionary. Thus we were forsaken! We, who sacrificed our blood willingly and with resignation for our country and who refused to violate our oath, were not only murdered and tortured, but our families were also exposed to robbery, violation, and often murder for the simple reason that their husbands, fathers or sons loyally served their country. Those who remained alive became paupers, because everything they possessed, property, money, treasures, libraries, clothing, lands, houses, was taken away from them.

It is hardly possible to imagine what happened in our unfortunate country when a disorganised horde of twelve million men, intoxicated with alcohol and, worse still, with the crazing spirit of a newly distilled license, swept over the country in their return from the front, robbing, burning, and destroying as they went. They had no regard whatever for the welfare of the nation or of the people

as a whole, but consulted only their own selfish and animal wishes.

At that time I was serving with the cavalry remount and, when the O. C. ordered me to take an oath of loyalty to the Provisional Government, I refused point blank and declared that I would never swear allegiance to a lot of criminal swindlers. This, of course, necessitated my retirement from the Army and it was with a sore heart that I was closely following the events developing around me. A deep feeling of wrath and hatred was gradually permeating my whole being against these conscious and determined destroyers of discipline and of their native land.

In June I had to proceed to Petrograd on business. It was with the greatest difficulty that my wife and I succeeded in getting into the train, because it was so jammed with soldiers, nearly all drunk, dirty, and most exasperating. The thing that amazed me most of all was the manner in which they behaved towards women. I was terrified for my wife (we had been married only three weeks before the Revolution broke out); but in the event of any trouble my decision was firm and resolute. I had kept my Browning and determined it should help me, if necessary, to prevent any one from behaving with disrespect toward my wife. Our journey happily terminated without any incident.

In Petrograd my mother and sisters told me all about the momentous disturbing events which had happened in February, though while we ourselves were there for just a few days, things were compara-

tively quiet. It was, however, most depressing to us to see red rags of revolution hanging all over the place instead of the familiar Russian flag, and to find on the streets many officers, fortunately the non-fighting ones, with red ribbons or brassards.

Many people welcomed the Revolution and when it came greeted it with smiling faces. Poor mortals, they did not realise what it really meant. I had frequent discussions with various groups, trying to enlighten them on the real meaning of what was happening, but nothing could change their minds. But just a few months later when the Bolsheviks came into power, those who had gone into ecstasy over the Revolution and raved over the long-awaited "Freedom" were cursing themselves for having supported the movement.

During the first period of the Revolution the people had two songs, one a pæan of victory set to the music of the "Marseillaise" and the other a funeral hymn which they sang to the tune of an old military funeral march. To any one who has lived through the Revolution and Bolshevist times there are few stronger impressions than the memory of these contrasting songs, the one with its excesses of rejoicing, and the other with its ineradicable note of sadness and tragedy, multiplied tenfold by the ragged processions with the open caskets through the streets.

In those days it was the fashion to wear a red bow or ribbon somewhere about your coat. However, I never wore anything red and therefore often brought upon myself the disapproval of people who believed that by wearing a red badge they were

doing something very important for their country and were helping it out of the difficulties into which it had been plunged by the Tsarist régime.

One day as I was walking along the main street in Kieff, I met a big procession consisting of men and women of all ages, professions, and conditions; of scholars and even of children. They carried, in addition to the usual red banners with their revolutionary mottoes, standards of blue and yellow, the national colours of the Ukraine, bearing inscriptions proclaiming the independence and self-determination of its people. The procession halted near the monument of the Prime Minister Stolypin, who was murdered in 1911 by an anarchist in one of the Kieff theatres in the presence of the Emperor. The statue was decked with red ribbons, while the eyes of the Premier were bandaged with a dirty red rag; and there the crowd stood and sang revolutionary songs as a demonstration against all this Tsarist Minister stood for. As I stopped on the curb and watched for a while, some students approached me, asking in most irritating tones:

"Comrade, why do you not take off your cap while the Revolutionary Anthem is being sung and also why is it that you do not wear a red ribbon, as everyone else does, to show your sympathy with the people and the Revolution?"

"As the long expected Freedom is now at last proclaimed in Russia," I responded, "I am just taking the opportunity of doing exactly what *I* please, and what I think right to do, and not what anybody else would like to impose upon me!"

At this answer, in which I used their own weapon, their beloved "Freedom," they were perplexed and, not finding words to continue gracefully this awkward conversation, they withdrew and let me alone.

The political atmosphere was everywhere becoming more and more electric. Every one was expecting something to happen, some serious change to take place in the political life of the country, as it was obvious that the Provisional Government could not remain in power. All the measures taken by the government were merely indulgences to the mob and catered to its lowest instincts. The situation being so very nervous and critical, we decided not to remain longer in Kieff away from all our relatives, where we could easily be cut off from the other members of our family owing to the disorder and chaos that reigned in the railway traffic. So in July we definitely left Kieff and went over to my mother-in-law's estate near Moscow, a fine country place called "Ouzkoe." The second part of the summer in the country among the members of my wife's family passed rather quietly and smoothly.

Towards the end of the summer all sorts of ominous rumours again began surcharging the air, every day more intensive, and suddenly, one of the last days of October, we discovered the telephone communication with Moscow was cut off and on the same night we heard the sound of gun and rifle shots from the city, only eight miles away. The tutor of my nephews, a young student, volunteered to walk to Moscow for reconnoitering purposes and also to visit my mother and my wife's mother who were

both living in the city. The local peasants warned us that the workmen of an ammunition factory only a mile away from our house proposed to raid the estate, search the house and inspect our documents. Not knowing exactly when they might come or what they really intended to do we organised a duty roster from among ourselves for every night. The total number of inhabitants of our house was fifteen, not counting the servants, of whom there were ten; but of these only two were men. Thus we had but six men who could be put down on the list for night duty. It was arranged that two, well armed, should be on patrol every night.

The sound of the cannonade from Moscow still continued. In a day or two my nephews' teacher returned and reported that fighting was going on in the whole of the city between the Bolsheviks on one side and officers and cadets on the other; that it was impossible to say just at present who would get the upper hand as both sides were fighting courageously and fiercely; and that my mother, who had been joined by my two sisters with their families and my two brothers from Petrograd, was well and safe, but none of them could leave the house without taking the risk of being killed in the streets. My wife's mother was also well, but likewise forced to sit at home for the same reason.

On the sixth day of the Moscow battle in the morning while two of my wife's brothers were absent in a neighbouring village on business, my wife and I were peacefully sitting at home reading when suddenly we heard a shot fired under our very windows.

I looked out and found that the house was surrounded by workmen armed to the teeth. As I knew from experience what a Bolshevik search meant and also what would be the result of their finding firearms in the house, my first thought was to conceal my Winchester. My wife and I ran through the whole house, but could not find a satisfactory place to hide it until finally my eye fell on an old sofa, which was broken and out of use. With a knife I cut open its cover, shoved the rifle in between the springs, and hastily sewed up the hole. The Bolsheviks might have entered the house at any second, so this had to be an action of a few minutes. Then, having told my wife to remain in her room and having sent my orderly to her as protection in case of emergency, I went to negotiate with the besiegers. On coming out of the house I saw that we were closely surrounded by proper Bolsheviks, so I promptly approached their leader and said:

"Now, what is it you have come for?"

"We have come," he said, "to search your house and estate, as it has been reported to us that you are concealing a number of armed men of the counter-revolutionary force, and also a stock of firearms such as rifles, revolvers, and machine guns."

I smiled at the idea but authorised them to proceed with the search at once. They jumped at this opportunity so unexpectedly offered them. However, they did not make a very minute search, were very polite and confiscated only two small rifles and three revolvers, among which was unfortunately my Browning. Taking these away they declared that

they wanted all rifle-barreled arms for fighting the government forces. They gave a receipt for each confiscated weapon and promised to return everything except the revolvers as soon as the Moscow fighting were over. They did not touch our sporting guns and promised to send us two more for our self-protection in the event of the house being attacked by irregular bands, which were numerous in the Moscow suburbs. They kept their promise and on the next day brought us, however incredible this may seem, two sporting guns. What was still more wonderful, after the Moscow battle, which lasted for eight days and nights and ended in a Bolshevist victory, the rifles which were confiscated were also returned to us in perfect order together with the remaining rounds of ammunition; but they were careful enough to keep the revolvers, which was the cause of the following argument with the Bolsheviks that brought back the rifles.

"I want my revolver back," I said, "because I need it for self-defence."

"You may get it back," replied the man in charge, "if you apply to the Moscow Soviet of the Workmen's, Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies, and this only on condition that you take an oath of loyalty to the Soviet Government in your future service."

"I have already taken an oath once before in which I swore to remain loyal to my Church, my Tsar, and my Country," I responded. "As this was an oath for my life, I am therefore not in the least prepared to break that oath, which is sacred to me, by taking another one of loyalty to the gang of rascals that you

are, the whole lot of you, who are destroying the Church, and selling the Country after having deposed our Tsar. On the contrary," I proceeded, "I here and now declare that I make it an object of my life to fight your gang wherever and whenever I find an opportunity of doing so, so help me God!"

In answer to my declaration, they threatened to bring me before the Revolutionary War Tribunal and make me take all the consequences such a trial would entail. From this day on I was registered and kept on their black list as a dangerous counter-revolutionary.

In the meantime a frightful bloody terror had started in Moscow which resulted in the arrest and shooting of all the officers and bourgeois they could lay hands on. Not wanting to take the risk of stupidly being caught by the Bolsheviks and becoming a victim of their terror, I at once decided to take my wife and change our residence from this Bolshevik-dominated Moscow to my native town of Orenburg, where in my opinion there was yet hope of organising with the Orenburg Cossacks some sort of resistance to the waves of Bolshevism which by then were already sweeping over all Central Russia.

With us came along my mother, one married sister with her husband and my youngest unmarried sister besides four servants who did not wish to part with us. It was with the utmost difficulty that we succeeded in obtaining two small compartments in the train, into which all ten of us had to squeeze somehow. Our journey was to last four full days and nights.

The first two days we travelled quite comfortably but on the third day at one of the stations our carriage was besieged by a crowd of soldiers and sailors. There was one sailor who was particularly demonstrative and insolent, and introduced himself to us by yelling that all the bourgeois must have their necks twisted and be chucked out of the window. Our situation became rather serious. Knowing the nature of the beast, I decided to take the risk of trying a plan, which, if successful, would allow us at least to continue; if not, then God help us. I stood up and curtly addressed the noisy sailor.

"Instead of shouting and creating disorder, you had better tell your comrades to keep quiet and come right into our compartments. It will be very difficult but still we can squeeze ourselves up a little more, if you promise to make your comrades behave."

"That's a bargain, comrade," said he and, having quieted his companions, he pushed into our compartment and sat himself down on a travelling case beside me. Inasmuch as I was in mufti and thus gave him no indication that I was an officer, he began telling me quite freely about the number of officers he had murdered and how much property he had plundered. A wild fury was heaving my soul at hearing his bloodthirsty tales; and it was all I could do to keep myself from strangling the beast with my own hands as he boasted of the vile crimes he had committed. But what could two of us do, with eight women to look after, against so many of them? The increasing fury within me against the Bolsheviks had reached its boiling point and I swore to myself to

show them no mercy but to destroy them whenever and wherever I could, by all the means within my power. Thus we travelled to Orenburg without further incident.

CHAPTER II

BLOWING UP A VODKA FACTORY

AT the railway station we were met by the man in charge of our town house who informed us that only one small suite of three rooms was habitable at the moment, as the remainder of the house, which had been used as a hospital during the war, was being renovated. So we were obliged to separate, my wife and I going with my sister and her husband and all the servants to the Central Hotel, thus leaving my mother and my youngest sister in the house.

The inhabitants of the town spoke little or not at all about Bolshevism, and had to be very guarded in what they said, as the military power in the town was in the hands of Colonel Dutoff, Ataman of the Orenburg Cossacks. The Cossacks who had remained at home were practically all heads of families and belonged to the military class that had not been mobilized during the war on account of age and consequently had not been infected with the plague of Bolshevism. This is why the local Bolsheviks had to keep quiet. Even the fiercest of them were afraid to manifest themselves or to display their theories openly.

During the first days of my sojourn in Orenburg I was closely following what was going on in the town

and attentively listening to what was being said. It was important for me to learn all that I could of the ideas of the Cossacks, of their psychology in the midst of the mass of theories which were then spreading over Russia, and of their various interpretations of these, as well as of the actual state of their minds and their feeling toward the whole complicated problem. Another and most essential thing for me was to find out the basis on which the local military authorities were acting. It was necessary for me to gather all this information in order to orient myself accurately and satisfactorily.

The administrative power was in the hands of a special committee called "The Committee for the Protection of the Country and the Revolution." This committee consisted of five members, of whom four were Social-Revolutionaries and one a Communist. All five were Jews, and it was obvious that neither the Cossacks nor the civil population had any confidence in them or trusted them in any way.

I attended several meetings of landowners, at which the chief matter under consideration was the question of organising special officers' detachments or squadrons in order to protect private property from destruction and robbery, cases of which were becoming more and more frequent, by the returning deserters from the front who had entirely surrendered themselves to their basest criminal instincts. It was the small landowners from among the peasant class who especially insisted upon the immediate formation of such detachments. The debate ended in favour of organising these and it was only a ques-

tion of obtaining the sanction of Ataman Dutoff. This task was laid upon me. Although the consent of the committee of five was also necessary, I made up my mind, however, not to present to them any formal written application for their sanction but just to inform them of the organisation of these detachments *post factum*. In the event of their refusal, I decided to use pressure. The Ataman at once gave his sanction, but directed me to go to the committee to obtain their consent as well.

At the outset they sought to checkmate our plan. I then asked them:

"Whom do you count upon in the event of a Bolshevik advance from Samara or Tashkent?" They at once replied:

"On you officers, of course!"

"In that case," I declared firmly, "when the Red Army does advance, all the officers will go and fight in the front line and will not think of defending you Social-Revolutionaries and your town."

They immediately became more conciliatory but expressed their fear that the formation of such officers' detachments would remind the people too much of the old régime, and that this was not in conformity with the ideas of the Social-Revolutionary party. Finally I became surfeited with their endless arguing and simply said:

"I came to you not for a political debate but merely for a formal matter, to have your signatures attached to these documents. As to my conditions, you know them." After a short consultation between themselves they signed.

Now I had to form the detachments, provide the necessary equipment, arms, and ammunition and secure quarters for them. All this took me but a few days. I was placed at the head of one of the detachments numbering forty men, and obtained my mother's consent to quarter them on our estate situated some sixty-five miles from the town. There they could easily be provided with horses, rations, and forage.

The area which we were to protect was a large one. Taking our estate for the centre of our district, we controlled an area with a radius of about seventeen miles. The winter was exceedingly cold, and this fact would make the task of protecting such an area, situated in the open steppes, particularly difficult. I had received everything that was necessary for my squadron, this is: forty rifles, fifty thousand rounds of ammunition, forty winter coats, forty pairs of snow boots and eight *troikas,* or teams of three horses, for our journey to quarters. All the men had their own revolvers, so these did not have to be provided.

On the eve of our departure I assembled my squadron at the barracks in order to give them my last instructions and to work out the details of our future course of action. Having done with business we peacefully sat down to tea and were regaling ourselves with less weighty matters than politics and fighting which was a real treat in those times when, unfortunately, we were suddenly disturbed by the entrance of a Cossack who handed me a letter from the Ataman which contained:

1. An order to disband the squadron, and for all the chiefs and commanding officers to report to the Ataman the next morning to discuss the situation created by the portentous news of the advance from Samara of a Bolshevik force estimated at over 20,000 men;

2. An order for all the officers to remain in town and to be prepared for despatch to the front line.

The following morning when we reported to the Ataman, he informed us that he had received a wire from the Commander-in-Chief of the Bolshevik forces, proposing that he surrender the town of Orenburg without fighting and promising in return safety and immunity for the Cossacks and their institutions. He asked what we thought of it. We replied unanimously that we would rather fight than surrender to Bolsheviks, as we all knew from experience that they could not be trusted; for on many occasions, in spite of their promises of inviolability, they had not hesitated to murder or to torture people to death.

On verifying the lists of registered officers and cadets, it was discovered that only a thousand to twelve hundred men could carry arms. The mobilisation began the same day and on the following morning a battalion of four hundred men started out to occupy the fighting line between Orenburg and Samara; and within a week everybody in the town who was in condition to fight had been mobilised and sent to the front. The state of our men in the line was deplorable. The weather was terrible with the temperature more than 15 degrees below zero ac-

companied by strong wind and snow. Complete absence of fortification and trenches was a heavy handicap, but the chief difficulty was that we had no artillery at all, whereas the Bolsheviks possessed a considerable number of both light and field guns.

I was not allowed to go to the front but was appointed commander of a Cossack cavalry detachment, which was to remain in the town to protect the civil population and to maintain order, as the local Bolsheviks, immediately upon the receipt of the news of the approach of the Red Army, combined with those in some of the neighbouring villages to make demonstrations and create disturbances. Moreover, there was a particularly dangerous element in the members of an infantry regiment of deserters who had murdered all their officers at the front and returned to Orenburg. The Samara Bolsheviks had allowed them to proceed to Orenburg as they found them thoroughly imbued with the Bolshevist ideas and procedure. The Samara lot figured that this regiment would undermine the defence from the inside while fighting would possibly still be going on at the front.

Because of all this the situation in the town was becoming more and more threatening. In the night time, gangs of armed men began prowling in the streets and cases of robbery and murder became frequent. Patrols from among the inhabitants of each house had to remain on watch at night. Thus at the hotel where we were staying I was chosen head of the guard and sat up every night together with ten other clients in one of the rooms of the hotel, where

we were subject to immediate call by our patrol. This was, of course, only when I was free from my other duties as commander of the Cossacks and was not sent anywhere to restore order. Fifty men of my detachment were always on duty with horses under saddle to proceed at a minute's notice to wherever they might be wanted.

During the day all was more or less quiet and my wife and I with my youngest sister often spent our spare time wandering about the town, especially in the Tartar quarter, which was by far the most interesting and fascinating section. During those excursions we several times visited my old friend, the Tartar horse dealer, who was quite a wealthy man and always received us very courteously, entertaining us with fine teas and delicious Asiatic sweets.

One night I was hurriedly summoned to the Ataman's headquarters where he gave me orders to proceed at once with a *sotnia,* a squad of a hundred mounted Cossacks, to the Government Wine and Spirit Depot which, it appears, was being stormed by the infantry regiment of deserters. The soldiers were breaking into the building to get at the spirit, of which there was a supply equal to about 20,000,000 bottles, stored in vats, drums and other containers. Most of the spirit was 90 per cent pure alcohol and was being held for mixing with water and flavouring to make the vodka of commerce that contained roughly 45 per cent of alcohol. The depot was situated on the bank of the Ural River on a large open square.

In less than five minutes I had started out with my *sotnia.* As soon as we arrived on the spot, we were met by several rifle volleys from within the depot. I ordered the Cossacks to dismount and open fire, while I ran into a house near by and called the Ataman on the telephone, described the situation to him and asked for his instructions in view of the pugnacious attitude of the soldiers, who had by this time occupied all the buildings of the depot. The Ataman gave me full power to act at my own discretion and did not care what happened as long as the mutiny was suppressed and an end put to the drunken orgy.

Given this free hand, I ordered ten Cossacks under the command of a sergeant to dig in and keep up the rifle fire on the depot from the front while I led the remaining ninety through roundabout streets towards the river side of the depot, from where we charged the place with wild Cossack cries but without firing a single shot. This rush was so unexpected that we succeeded in getting right inside and in disarming the whole regiment of two thousand men, who were so thoroughly intoxicated that they did not realise the character of our ruse nor have time to offer any concerted resistance. We escorted the whole gang of drunken ruffians to one of the regimental barracks, where I placed a platoon of Cossacks with a machine gun to keep an eye on them.

When I came back to the depot I was struck by what I saw. The whole place was simply swarming with a crowd of people of every description and every one of them, male and female, under-aged and

adult, carried some sort of receptacle, pail, bottle, glass, pitcher or tea-pot. With a greedy fury they were breaking the barrels containing the spirit and were drinking this nearly pure alcohol; then, having satisfied their thirst, were filling their receptacles to carry them back for a stock at home. Among the crowd one could see people of all classes and ages from the old men of eighty down to youngsters of only eight and ten. It was frightful to see the drunken children, who, having tasted the terrible liquor, collapsed on the spot and went off to sleep on the snow. Any number of people, adults and children, had their limbs frozen during their drunken sleep in the cold. Some of them lost their hands, others had their faces frozen so that they looked more like turnips, with no trace of eyes or nose or any other of the attributes of a human face. A great number of them were frozen to death.

From the very beginning, the Cossacks were busy breaking the barrels and I gave strict orders to open the taps or break the pipes to let all the wine flow into the Ural River, and thus hasten the end of this unheard-of mass intoxication. But the crowds in their alcoholic rage had discovered a few unemptied barrels in an out-of-the-way cellar and had drained them. As the spirit which was let out through the taps and pipes ran into the river by a ditch, the people filled their crockery from this rivulet with a filthy liquid which was a mixture of wine, earth, dirt and other contamination which happened to be at the bottom of it.

The only alternative I saw was to blow up the

remaining vats and set fire to the flowing spirit. But before that it was essential to clear the place of the crowd in order to avoid any casualties resulting from the explosion; but this proved itself to be an even more difficult task than the capture of the armed soldiers.

Just at that moment I received an order to proceed with twenty Cossacks to a fire that had broken out in the building of the Singer Sewing Machine Company, which, though in flames, was being ransacked by the mob. So I immediately hurried to the spot and cleared the mob by means of *nagaikas,* or Cossack whips. One man had to be shot because he resisted and wounded one of my men with a revolver. As the Singer Building was exactly opposite the hotel where my wife was staying, I took the opportunity to go across and see her. I found her in a desperate state and besought her to go at once over to live with my mother in our house, as that part of the town was much quieter. I sent her off under escort of five Cossacks, and went back to the wine depot.

When I returned, I tried to persuade the crowd to disperse, but in answer to my request several revolver shots were fired which resulted in the killing of one Cossack and the wounding of two others. Then I concentrated my men at the farther end of the place and ordered them to fire a volley over the heads of the crowd. We heard cries and more revolver shots but the crowd still refused to move. I was beginning to lose patience and, having given my second in command orders to patrol the town with

fifty Cossacks in order to stop all people in possession of spirit in the streets and to destroy it on the spot and in case of resistance to use their arms, I charged the crowd with whips. This time they used not only revolvers but also attacked us with knives and stones. Again several Cossacks and horses were stabbed or wounded. As it was impossible for me to sacrifice any more of my men in this way, I placed two machine guns at one of the angles of the square and fired two rounds from each, and immediately afterwards charged them again, but this time with drawn swords. The Cossacks were in a rage against the people for having killed and wounded several of their fellows, and cut into the crowd with fury. The result of that attack was that the crowd was at last dispersed, after having paid for their greed of drink with fifteen killed and over sixty wounded. After having thus cleared the place and cared for the wounded, I immediately put pyroxylin under the vats and reported by 'phone to the Ataman that I was going to blow up the depot. The Ataman replied that he was himself arriving on the spot at once.

It was close upon twelve o'clock of the second night we had wasted over this affair that we set fire to the fuses. The weather was very fine and the air frosty and still. The snow under a brilliant moon made a wonderful setting. The place was surrounded by three hundred Cossacks who were pressed by the threatening mob, which was again collecting round the place. It seemed that the people were prepared to give up everything, even their

lives, just for a glass of spirit; whips, swords and even machine guns could not stop them!

The sight of the explosion was wonderful. It was something quite fairy-like. First crimson, then yellow and blue flames sprang high up in the air in a solid column which spread at the top and came down like a fountain of thousands of little blue tongues of flame of the burning drops of spirit, while round the blazing depot flaming rivers were streaming on the surface of the spotless white snow burning their way like molten iron from a blast furnace and meeting again down on the ice of the Ural River. Soon the whole surface of the frozen stream was ablaze with these bluish-yellow flames and the frost covered trees on the farther bank were aglow with an uncanny, almost miraculous light.

The crowd which was watching the magnificent sight, on seeing that such an enormous quantity of alcohol was being destroyed, pressed harder and harder until it finally broke through the line of resisting Cossacks and again rushed towards the blazing depot.

As far as I could make out, there still remained eight vats full of the spirit. I then rode up to the Ataman who was still there on horseback, pointing out to him, that in the event of the cisterns beginning to explode, the casualties would be counted in thousands. He readily saw that a catastrophe was imminent unless drastic measures were at once taken to remove the crowd. So he ordered us to clear the place, whatever this might necessitate, be it swords, rifles or machine guns; but that the place must be

cleared at any cost of that crowd of demented humanity. As I was standing beside the Ataman, a *tchinovnik* or Government official, aged about sixty, was passing close by, carrying in his hand a kettle. Seeing his purpose, the Ataman set his horse square across the man's path, saying to him:

"You go straight back from where you came!" In answer to this the man drew a revolver, but before he had time to pull the trigger he was shot dead by the Ataman himself. Turning my horse round to go and carry out the orders of the Ataman, I caught sight of a fellow who was preparing to fire at him from behind. I drew my sword and, before he could fire, severed his arm clean at the elbow, so the bullet struck the ground.

Then began a real battle. For two hours we were clearing the blazing depot of those raving, crazed human beings. It was absolute hell! The people were completely off their heads. They threw themselves flat on their stomachs and thus consumed the burning liquid. The explosions of the eight cisterns followed consecutively one after the other at a period of fifteen to twenty minutes. It was impossible to establish how many people perished under the ruins, how many were burnt alive in the spirit and how many were killed during the fighting; but afterwards the report showed that well over three hundred had been burned, killed or wounded. Among the Cossacks were seven killed and sixteen wounded.

It was almost daylight when we were relieved by a fresh *sotnia* and were allowed to go and rest; but

the hour of rest was not a long one. At eleven o'clock in the morning I was again called by telephone to the wretched wine depot, as the indefatigable crowd was once more gathering around it.

I saddled my horse and went off and found that this is what had happened. Between the depot and the river there was a well. Part of the spirit which had been drawn off from some of the vats through the taps had drained into the well. When the people discovered this, they took advantage of the fact that this heaven-sent cistern was in an out of the way place and immediately started by means of ropes and pails filling their bottles, cans, etc., with the mucky but still intoxicating liquid. What is more, they started a new game: being out of sight, they loaded barrels and buckets on horse sledges and carted away large quantities of the cursed beverage. I ordered all these auxiliary implements destroyed on the spot; and the crowd, scared by our *nagaikas,* dispersed without further trouble. In order finally to be rid of this ghastly business I had my men gather and pour into this well, at a time when the crowd could see them, several barrels of pig-swill and felt that we had at last beaten them.

CHAPTER III

TRAPPED BY DESERTERS

ON my way home I was anticipating with delight a good night's rest. But unfortunately this was not to be; for late in the evening I was again called to headquarters and in company with the chief of the municipal militia, a fierce Caucasian of Georgian nationality, one Mr. Gambashidze, and three district superintendents, was dispatched to one of the hotels in the vicinity of the wine depot, where it was reported a tremendous bacchanalia was in progress and a murder had been committed.

We anticipated an ambuscade and therefore took care to arm ourselves well before we started off in our motor car. The thermometer was about twenty-five degrees below zero but fortunately there was no wind. To get to our destination we had to pass by the wine depot again. Here, around the line of Cossacks, crowds of people still continued to knock about, waiting in expectation that the military force would either be removed, or that the Cossacks would not be sufficiently alert to prevent the crowd from getting at the remaining wine.

As we were crossing the place we were fired upon and returned a few shots without stopping our car. Happily none of us was hit. Only one bullet touched one of the wheels.

The hotel which was the object of our trip was situated on a rather large open place that was lighted with two huge electric lights. At first sight everything within the building seemed to be peaceful and quiet and quite dark. We entered the courtyard, after having left two men outside the gates. The proprietor, whom we found hidden in a dark corner of his pigsty, admitted that a murder had been committed in the top story; that the culprit was hiding at the top of the stairs; and that as soon as any one attempted to go up, he at once opened fire with a revolver.

There were two means of egress from the upper story: one was the main staircase with an opening into the place; the other a fire escape descending into the courtyard. We went up the main staircase and began thumping at the door.

At first the murderer replied with revolver shots; but, after discovering that he had to do with Cossacks and official people, he dashed off towards the back stairs where he encountered one of our men and the proprietor, who had recovered from his fright at our arrival. Then, seeing that there was no escape for him that way, he again bolted into the building, began firing his revolver through the window and threatened to throw a hand grenade.

Then I decided to smoke him out by a ruse. I ran into the yard and in a very loud voice shouted to my men to hurry to the main staircase in order to break the culprit's door open and force their way into his hiding place. All the men rushed to the stairs and made a terrific noise at the door, while I remained

in a dark corner of the courtyard. At the very first blows on the door, the murderer looked out of the window and, having made sure that there was no one outside, jumped out on the top landing of the fire escape holding his revolver ready to fire. This was all I was waiting for. I threw up my Winchester and fired, aiming at his leg. He came down, rolling head over heels and remained motionless. But as I approached him, he managed to fire his revolver and thus succeeded in blowing off my *papakha,* the big fur busby of the Cossacks. In self-defence I was obliged to use the butt end of my rifle on him before disarming him and tying him up with a rope.

The murderer happened to be one of the infantry regiment deserters; his victim was a Cossack officer who had several times been wounded at the German front, and whom the murderer killed with premeditation, intending to commit a robbery.

Having thus captured the scoundrel, we proceeded to search the building and its annexes in the yard, which had numerous dark corners, cellars and sheds. At first all these buildings appeared to be empty, but finally we heard the voice of one of the Militia Superintendents calling us from some underground refuge.

We hurried in the direction of the sound and went down through a hatch into an underground passageway. There below we discovered a party of eighteen men playing cards and drinking. The place was dimly lighted by a few small candle ends. All the men were so drunk or so absorbed in the game that they were unaware of our presence during the first

few seconds and, when they came to realise that we were there, it was already too late as our revolvers were pointed at them. We looked through their documents, which proved that all of them had quite recently arrived from Samara. The documents bore the signature of a certain Kobizeff, who was the Commander-in-Chief of the Bolshevik forces advancing towards Orenburg. Apparently they were some of the numerous clandestine agents whom the Bolsheviks had sent to our town to reinforce the local organisations, whose problem was to start an insurrection at the approach of the Red forces and thus from the rear strike a decisive and a telling blow at the Cossacks, defenders of their native land and families.

We disarmed the party and took them out into the yard where the bitter cold soon sobered them, as they began to protest loudly and make a defence for themselves. I was obliged to order "Hands up" and have the Cossacks rope each separately under the threat of a revolver muzzle.

Just that moment we heard the spit of rifles at a short distance and the singing of bullets over our heads or the sound of their penetrating the wooden fence which was the only barrier between ourselves and the open square. We were frankly perplexed and I went outside the gates to find the answer but came back quicker than I went, as I was literally spattered by a rain of bullets. My coat was shot through in two places. What had happened was this. It appears that one of our prisoners had had the pluck and cunning to escape and to inform a

Cossack *sotnia,* which had that same day returned from the German front and was quartered across the open place exactly opposite the hotel, that arrests of prominent Bolsheviks were about to be made by us. As that *sotnia* had become entirely Bolshevik, they very naturally decided to assist their pals and so had opened fire on us. At that moment one of our men cried:

"Look out. They are training machine guns on us!"

I looked through the fence and saw that the Cossacks had placed one of those deadly weapons on the steps of the house and were just fixing a belt in it. I ran my rifle through a hole in the fence and drew on the gunner. As he dropped, another man at once took his place and fired a few rounds; but he also followed his companion.

Just then I suddenly heard the throb of a motor car and to my surprise saw all three of our mates, the Militia Superintendents, driving away as fast as the engine could take them. So there we were, Gambashidze and myself, alone inside the yard, guarding eighteen prisoners with arms tied and confronted with about one hundred well-armed deserters watching us from across the place and ready at any moment to fire upon us. Our only protection was the thin wooden fence and closed gates, through which bullets penetrated as easily as they would through paper or glass. Our position was anything but enviable, but there it was and something had to be done. Nobody could help us, so we had to help ourselves. But how?

The impetus came from Gambashidze.

"Look here," he said, "we can't go on sitting here for ages, without making some sort of attempt to escape one way or the other."

"I quite agree with you in this wise discovery of yours, old man," said I, "but what *are* we to do?"

"You let me try. I'll open the gates and see what's doing the other side, across the road. Just you wait," and before I had time to utter a word, Gambashidze slipped through the gates, but he slipped back again, just as rapidly as I had before him.

"No," he said, "if we are to get out of this scrape at all, we shall certainly not do it that way. See here, I've already one bullet through the leg, and my *polushubok* (winter coat) looks like a piece of fish net from their blasted machine gun. So we must think of something better than that!"

Then a thought struck me.

"I say, what if I tell our prisoners to shout for all they're worth at their comrades across the road that they have been released by us and now want to come out and join them, and ask them to cease firing? Then you and I can easily follow close behind them with our revolvers all ready to fire in case they offer to turn on us. Then once we are outside, with eighteen prisoners as a barricade, we might easily bolt into the narrow street close by on the right and escape round the first corner to the right or left. What do you think? It seems worth risking, anyhow!"

Gambashidze was silent for a moment and then said:

"That would be easy enough if we keep cool and are quick about it; but remember that each of us must look after himself. If we manage to keep together, all well and good; if we get separated, let's not worry about the other fellow but each of us try to save his own soul. After all, in such a fix as we are in, all roads lead home."

"Yes, and quick too—We will not neglect any short cuts," said I. "So it's fixed, is it?"

"Yes, and let's do it at once, if only we succeed in persuading our prisoners to communicate with their comrades."

At this his Caucasian features took on an expression of firmness and determination to cope with any situation Fate might choose to put before him. So we told our prisoners that we would set them free if they would shout the message to their brethren over the way. As they consented we untied them. They opened the gates and began waving a piece of white cloth to their comrades who ceased fire. Gambashidze and I followed immediately behind with drawn revolvers, slightly bent, so that our heads should not be seen from across the place. Those few minutes were very thrilling and my heart was nearly jumping out of my chest with excitement.

As we came up to a small street on the right we both sprang to one side without a sound, so that our former prisoners and now protectors, as Fate would have it, being themselves in a nervous state under the persistent eye of the machine gun, did not notice our disappearance.

We ran sharply round the corner, took the next

turn to the left, and were then out of sight and safe. At this moment, I remembered with a chuckle of joy that I had kept all the prisoners' documents which we had taken from them during the search, and which they, in their excitement, had forgotten to ask for.

Gambashidze and I ran direct to the nearest Police Station from which I telephoned for two hundred mounted Cossacks who arrived in a few minutes. I took the column direct to the headquarters of the soldiers who, less than one hour ago, had been firing at us. Our approach was unexpected so that we easily disarmed them and sent the lot under escort to a very strongly guarded barrack. With them we also arrested ten of our eighteen prisoner-protectors. During this scrap our casualties were five Cossacks stabbed with knives.

Having done with this business, I at last returned home tired, hungry, and nervously distraught. After so many disturbed days and nights it was the first time that I was able to sit down quietly to dinner which was prepared for me in no time by my mother, wife and sister in spite of the late hour. To complete the celebration I had a real bath and peacefully went to bed.

That night I had the feeling that if any one waked me, whatever the reason, I would tell him to go to the warm country and stay there, but that *I* was not going anywhere. As luck would have it the night passed quietly and I had a real night's rest.

During the last few days we had been awaiting the arrival from Moscow of my brother and my servant,

who was to bring me cash. We were extremely anxious about them, as we hadn't the slightest idea whether they could pass the Bolshevik lines.

One day a report came from the front line that the Bolsheviks had been driven back as far as Samara, a distance about two hundred seventy miles, by our small but valiant Cossack army. At that splendid news every one heaved a sigh of relief; but unfortunately, my enjoyment of the news was marred by the fact that I had to continue struggling with that ill-fated well near the spirit depot. Incredible as it may seem, the people, even after the pollution we had effected, continued to draw up the cursed fluid and purify it by leaving the receptacles for a while in the sharp cold saying as they saw the spirit rise to the top and the rest frozen solid: "It is God who has purified it for us!"

I remember a very strange but a very disagreeable incident that occurred during one of these trips to the everlasting well. One day somewhere about three o'clock in the afternoon I was informed that several sleighs from a neighbouring village had come to the well to fetch some of the poisonous stuff. Calling twenty Cossacks I immediately rode to the spot. On approaching we noticed that the peasants had already filled the barrels and had crossed the river intending to cart away the liquid to their village. We pursued them across the ice to stop them and empty their barrels on the snow. The idiots did not understand that it was real poison and that consuming it would be the surest way of contracting either cholera or typhoid fever.

As I came to about the middle of the river, an old man threw a thick iron bar in between my horse's legs. The horse stumbled, slipped on the ice, and fell on its side bringing me down with it. In falling I struck my head on a sharp piece of ice and cut my ear badly. As I sat up, I noticed that the same old man was rushing at me with a wicked-looking weapon made of a ten-pound scale weight fastened to the end of a strap. I drew my big Colt and fired at a distance of about five yards. The bullet struck him square in the middle of the forehead. One may imagine my terror when I saw that the man only shook his head and, having taken his hat off, started to wash his blood-stained brow with snow. It was a marvel that he did not fall. I presume the bullet was deflected by the skull and followed round just near the skin until it came out behind, as is sometimes the case. Even so, the old man must have had a tremendously heavy frontal piece to have deflected a Colt at five yards. The following day I saw him with a bandage on his head busy cutting ice on the river!

When I had finished losing time over this incident of our two heads, I noticed that the peasants on the further bank had pulled one of the Cossacks off his horse and were beating him. I at once rode to his assistance and with the help of another Cossack, saved our companion who was being badly knocked about, though the peasants had had time to take pretty severe revenge on him for the loss of their drinks. After we had emptied all the barrels, we

laid the wounded man on one of the sledges, and forced a peasant to take him back to the barracks.

The next morning news came to headquarters that the Bolshevik forces had blown up all the railway bridges on their retreat to Samara and that a shocking thing had occurred. A passenger train was due to leave Samara for Orenburg soon after. The Bolsheviks there informed the train officials that the line was free and that the train could safely proceed, but they intentionally omitted to mention anything about the blown up bridges. The train went in the evening and travelled at its usual speed, the engine driver having no knowledge of the existing danger. Having covered a distance of only about twenty miles, the train arrived at the first destroyed bridge and naturally made a terrible plunge down the embankment and burst into flames.

Many passengers were killed and wounded. One hour after the disaster another train from Samara arrived on the scene. But this train was a special, consisting of only three trucks, and stopped a safe distance from the burning train. A laughing crowd of sailors descended from the trucks and submitted the passengers of the unfortunate train to the most unimaginable cruelties. After they had killed those remaining alive and robbed all, they carried the bodies to a small station across the frozen river, put them in trucks coupled to a live engine without a driver and then opened the throttle and jumped, leaving the lifeless train to make its way into Orenburg. It did not, however, reach our town, as the

steam gave out, leaving it in the middle of the steppes to be found by our reconnoitering parties.

All this terrible tragedy of unthinkable cruelty was related to me by a Colonel who was saved through a miracle of physical endurance, for he was still alive when the train was found by our Cossacks.

He was travelling in plain clothes with the quite peaceful intention of visiting his family in Orenburg, whom he had not seen for three years.

When the sailors pulled him out from under the debris of the train, wounded and bruised, one of the wretches recognised him and shouted to his pals:

"Hey, comrades, here's Colonel N., who is obviously attempting to join Dutoff to fight us!"

He was beaten on the face with a whip until his cheeks were literally torn off and his teeth and jaws exposed. When he finally lost consciousness, the brutes put some salt on the wounds, tied his face up with rags and fastened his hands behind his back so that he could not take off that terrible bandage. He ended his fearful story to me by saying:

"It is a wonder I did not go mad from the indescribable sufferings those beasts made me go through! There is certainly one thing I am determined about now, and this is that, although I was coming here with no thought of fighting the Bolsheviks, now I swear that, as soon as I am recovered, I will avenge myself on them with such merciless retaliation, as even they could not dream!"

At the news of the tragedy I was terrified by the idea that my brother might happen to have been among the passengers.

When the train with the corpses was brought to Orenburg, all the victims were put in the hospital morgue, and I at once hurried there, very much upset by the fear of finding my brother among them. On arriving at the morgue I enquired for the names of the victims; but they were unidentified so I had to look at the faces and, thank God, found my brother was not there, which was a tremendous relief.

In the evening I was again summoned to the damnable spirit well, and I was so tired of that game, that I decided to have done with it for ever, and that's what I did. I gave orders to the Cossack platoon which was coming with me to take with them all that was necessary to blow it up, and on arrival, I first dispersed the crowd which was still around it, and then dynamited the well and a good portion of the earth near it. Thus terminated the "spirit phase" of my Orenburg experiences and the people's drinking craze, which involved so many calamities and deaths, and wasted so much of our time and nervous energy.

CHAPTER IV

CHARGING WINDMILLS

ONE morning a deputation of peasants from our estate came to me and invited us to come and occupy our house, guaranteeing our absolute safety and even promising to guard us. The invitation lost some of its impressiveness in view of the fact that they all were drunk from the spirit which they had taken out of the stock in our distillery.

According to them this is what had happened on our estate where we had stored over 4,000,000 gallons of spirit. This stock had been sealed by the Government in 1914, when the general mobilisation was proclaimed in Russia and the sale of vodka prohibited.

Now the peasants, in my opinion very wisely, disposed of that spirit. The facts were that they had no seed grain and the Bolshevik Government would not sell to the peasants individually, but only wholesale to communities. The peasants, knowing what a difficult task it was to collect money from the community as a whole, solved the question by breaking the Government seals on the wine and began to sell it to any purchaser at a price of forty kopecks a bottle. Thus in less than six weeks the peasants were in possession of over 600,000 roubles cash which, according to the cost of grain in those days, was a sum very much in excess of what they required for pur-

chasing their seed grain. Not knowing that the spirit had already been sold by us to the Government the year proceeding the war and that we received from the Government almost the total value of it, the deputation addressed me in the following words:

"Well, we have done away with your wine spirit. Thanks very much. And now the community has decided to let you have 200 bottles, that you should not be too greatly disappointed at the news that the main stock does not exist any longer; and to-morrow those two hundred bottles will be brought here for you to dispose of in the way you find most agreeable."

It was astonishing that during all those weeks of drunkenness none of our property was touched by the peasants; but that, on the contrary, it was they who undertook to protect it and every day selected from among their number a guard of some twenty men who were strictly forbidden to drink wine while on duty. During all that period there was only one serious casualty, the killing of an old peasant who insisted that the spirit still belonged to us, the owners of the estate, and remonstrated with them for selling other people's property.

At the time of the peasants' visit several days had passed without any incident worth recording. But this did not continue. One night I was again urgently summoned by the Ataman who said:

"Look here, I am informed that to-night at ten o'clock a meeting will be held by the Bolsheviks in one of the windmills on the northern outskirts of the town. At this meeting they will discuss the details of the insurrection they are planning in the town,

and afterwards they will distribute firearms for the occasion to the participants. So you take your Cossacks and round up all the Bolsheviks and confiscate their weapons."

This new raid appealed to me as one worth doing and interesting in the bargain, since it involved a bit of risk under rather simple but sporting conditions. Action had to be taken very carefully and cleverly, as there were about forty mills on the outskirts of the town and we did not know exactly in which of these the meeting was to be held. Besides we had no information whatever as to the number who would attend. Also I feared to take too large a group of Cossacks, because this might scare the Bolsheviks and cause them to postpone the meeting until another day. On the other hand, if our party were too small, we might fall into an ambuscade, where one never knows what may happen.

Considering all this, I took only twenty-five Cossacks with me. As a number of Bolshevik agents were closely following our movements, before starting I drew up the squad and loudly announced that we were going out of town to one of the villages where there was trouble to try and restore order; and that, as the village was eight to ten miles south of the town, we would not be back before noon of the following day.

We left the town by the southern bridge and rode all the way round the city, in order to approach the mills from the north. This manœuvring was entirely successful so that we concealed ourselves unnoticed in the yard of a convent on the edge of the

open terrain on which all the mills were situated. Having left our rifles and swords with the horses in the courtyard to avoid attracting attention, a party of eight of us walked towards the mills and kept our ears open to hear what the people around us were saying and thus tried to find out exactly in which of the numerous mills the proposed meeting was to be held. An hour later we noticed that people were gathering in the largest mill which occupied a central position among the others. They were assembling cautiously one by one and seemed to be of rather doubtful appearance.

I returned to the convent and told the others to be ready. From the yard we could easily observe in the bright moonlight everything that was happening near the mill. We waited half an hour after the last man had gone in and then I sent out six men to capture the Bolshevik sentries which I figured would be posted in an outer circle to signal to their companions at the mill in the event of the approach of a military force, or of danger of any kind. In a short time the Cossacks came back with four captives whom I first questioned and then tied up.

Now came the decisive moment for action. There was only one way of doing it and this was to storm the mill. The questioning of the Bolshevik sentries showed that there were about twenty men at the meeting. I concealed fifteen of my men behind various mills to catch any Bolsheviks that might attempt to get away and also to stop any who might come from outside to give a hand to their fellows in the mill if the scrap should develop into a noisy one.

With the other ten I carefully surrounded the place. This accomplished, the Sergeant and I came up to the door and knocked. The mill was dark and everything was silent. The moment was thrilling. We thumped on the door for about five minutes without result and, though we stood close up to the door, we could not hear a sound from the inside.

Tired of this game, I ordered the Sergeant to break the door open. I just had the time to utter these words, when a volley was fired from within. My Sergeant fell with a cry:

"Oh, they've killed me, quite killed me!"

My *papakha* was blown off and I felt a stinging pain at the top of my head. Three more volleys were fired. I succeeded in crawling over to the Sergeant who was rolling about in the snow and pulled him away from in front of the door. Then we examined our wounds, to find that the Sergeant was shot through the shoulder but no bones were touched, and that I had only an insignificant scratch at the top of my head, so slight, that there was even no trace of blood, and I might as well call it a bruise. That was all the harm the Bolsheviks did us this time. I bandaged the Sergeant's shoulder and he, realising that he was still alive, became quite cheerful again and started threatening the aggressors in the mill.

We now crawled up to one of the windows and, leaning against the wall on either side of it so that the bullets from inside could not hit us, we succeeded with the butt of our rifles in smashing the shutters and glass of the window and thus making an opening into the mill.

Now the shots were coming like rain from everywhere, and from the top of the mill some one was screaming:

"Help! they are killing us, robbing us!" As a matter of fact we had not yet fired a single shot, whereas the Bolsheviks had kept up a steady fusillade. Three Cossacks were wounded seriously and two slightly. One of our sentries rushed up and reported that there were armed people coming from all sides and threatening the Cossacks.

There was no time to be lost, so I ran to the horses, jumped into the saddle and, holding a hand grenade, rode up to the mill and stopped behind a protecting corner. The firing from within was still continuing at short intervals. I chose an auspicious moment during a lull in the fusillade and, cantering past the smashed window, threw the bomb inside without stopping my horse. In about half a minute, I heard the detonation. When I turned back, I saw that half of the mill had been wrecked. Then with twelve Cossacks I sprang into what remained of the building, ordering the remaining troopers to hold up the crowd, which by this time had already gathered, and not to hesitate to fire if they could not be otherwise kept back. Our first thought was to rescue the wounded from the mill and to extinguish the fire started by the explosion. This we soon controlled by means of snow. Of the sixteen Bolsheviks at the meeting two were killed and seven wounded.

Inside the mill we found five boxes containing rifles, revolvers and even two Lewis guns.

All the Bolsheviks were taken to the Convent yard

where they were searched and left in charge of five Cossacks, while I returned to the Cossacks around the mill who were already engaged in a scrap with Bolsheviks who were hurrying to the spot from the town. I ordered them to cease firing and charge the crowd which could not resist the attack and ran for their lives, leaving two of their number killed. We lost one Cossack, shot with a revolver. All this took place in less than two hours and a half.

The next morning it was reported to headquarters that the Bolsheviks had again commenced their advance from Samara, and that this time their army numbered twenty-six thousand men. Their principal hope and support were three thousand sailors of the Baltic fleet who were already well known for their fierceness and savagery and were called by the Bolsheviks "The Beauty and the Glory of the Revolution."

Inspired by all this encouraging news, the local Bolsheviks were becoming every day more and more aggressive, and consequently we Cossacks had more and more work on our hands.

One night when I had to go out on some business, I noticed some one in an enormous fur coat, walking directly in front of me. I had only passed the mysterious figure by ten or fifteen yards when I heard a revolver shot and jumped quickly round with my Colt ready to fire. A voice that seemed strangely familiar came from the depths of the fur coat. What was my astonishment when I recognised the man as a priest from one of the local churches, who had

taken his turn of night duty and for that purpose had been given a revolver.

"Father deacon!" I cried, "what on earth are you firing for?"

"Oh!" said he, showing me the revolver, "for God's sake don't be frightened, child. I never carried such a thing before in my life and so as to get more familiar with it, I occasionally fire while I wander about the streets on night duty, to cheer me up and frighten the wicked!" I laughed at this man of the spirit and walked on.

During these days I was instructed to search as carefully and as energetically as possible the houses in the west end of the town, which was simply swamped with Bolsheviks in possession of firearms, and to arrest those who could not produce a permit for carrying these. This job was extremely tiring and harassing as it always had to be done at night and many people had to be shot for resisting and firing at us. The danger was constant, as the men whom we were after were anything but brave and preferred to snipe from behind a corner.

I feel I must mention one of the cases that turned up during a search of this nature, as it has a direct connection with an incident which occurred later. The west end of the town which we were supposed to search, was full of night dens in which, beside tea and beer, poisonous home-made vodka was also sold. These places received our special attention because it was also in them that most of the Bolshevik meetings were held, and it was to them that birds of a particular character flocked.

One night I entered such a dive with two Cossacks and there found in it a considerable number of people, drinking tea and some vodka, while others were playing cards. In that crowd one man especially drew our attention. He had a gloomy face and his appearance was altogether filthy. He wore a soldier's coat, and was sitting alone in one of the dark corners of the room drinking beer. As we came closer, he drew his head still deeper into the collar of his coat as if he wanted to escape our notice. I gave a tip to one of my Cossacks to keep a sharp eye on him, and proceeded with the second Cossack to search the rest of the party. All except one had to be arrested, for, although not all of them were in possession of firearms, they all had documents bearing the signature of the Samara Soviet. So they were all taken out and turned over to the Cossacks outside, while I returned and proceeded to search the gloomy-looking man who had attracted my attention when I first entered the house. On him I found one revolver and three documents. According to the first document he was a pure bred Communist, by the second an ordinary peasant and by the third an officer. I hadn't the least idea which document was the correct one and which one I was to believe as he refused to answer any of my questions no matter how hard I pressed him. It was only when I pointed my revolver at him that he gave me his name which was Soldatenkoff. It was with this same Soldatenkoff that I afterwards had a stirring encounter.

CHAPTER V

IN TRENCHES OF SNOW

DURING the following days we not only saw the gradual retirement of our forces before the increasing Bolsheviks on the Samara front but we also received quite unexpected reports saying that large Bolshevik forces were likewise advancing from the east along the Tashkent-Orenburg railway. This caused the withdrawal of a considerable number of men from the Samara to the new Tashkent front and placed the anti-Bolshevik forces in an exceedingly precarious situation inasmuch as the total number of these forces, not counting my *sotnia* which were needed to maintain order in the town, was estimated at fifteen hundred unmounted men.

In spite of these threatening conditions I at last had an opportunity to remain quietly at home with my family, though I knew from experience that whenever I was able to enjoy a day of leisure and peace, it always presaged for me some serious trouble as the calm before the storm.

One morning while I was at headquarters, a Cossack reported to me that a party of mounted men wished to see me. I went out and found a group of men riding small shaggy horses, each in possession of a lasso and a wolf whip instead of arms. It was a party of nomadic Bashkirs from the steppes of

Aralsk. It is interesting to know that this whip is their favourite weapon for wolf hunting and consists of a short stock with a long leather plaited lash. When hunting wolves, they first place a carcass somewhere in the open field and then hide themselves with their horses behind bushes or a small hillock in the vicinity. The wolves with their keen sense of smell soon detect food and come out of the woods to devour the bait and eat until they are hardly able to move, lying down to rest after their meal. The Bashkirs wait until the beasts have thus gorged themselves stupid and then rush them from their ambuscades and race wild as the wolves themselves over the steppes after their game, trying to crack them across the bridge of the nose with their lash. A good blow on that part of the head kills the animal on the spot. Then the huntsman finishes the wolf by cutting its throat and finally, in accordance with their superstitious belief, they bite out with their teeth the gristly part of the wolf's ears, in order to prevent the animal from spoiling.

In answer to my inquiries as to who they were and whence they came, their leader replied in poor Russian:

"We are nomads of the Bashkir tribe from the Aralsk steppes and have come here to interview the Ataman on a certain business."

"The Ataman is very busy just at present but if you tell me what the business is I shall transmit your message the very first moment I have a chance to do so."

"And who art thou?" asked the leader. These

people always address every one with a "thou" instead of "you."

"I am in command of the Cossack forces in the town," said I.

After that they exchanged a few words between themselves, determining, as I thought, what action they should take; and, having evidently decided that I could be relied upon, they said:

"We know that you are fighting with the Bolsheviks, who rob and kill everybody. At present there are many of them coming here from Tashkent. They attack our camps along their way and take everything they can. So we came here to ask the Ataman for his authority to fight them, whenever we have the opportunity of doing so!"

I told them that there couldn't be any harm in fighting Bolsheviks; on the contrary, every one must fight them with all his might if we were to live. After a pause they said:

"No, that's not enough for us. You had better ask the Ataman to deliver us written authority, as nowadays it is dangerous to commit oneself without a paper justifying one's action."

I reported the matter to the Ataman, and he gave instructions to give them a written order, saying that the Commander-in-Chief of the Orenburg forces invited all the nomad tribes to join in fighting the common enemy, the Bolsheviks.

The result of all this was quite surprising. In five or six days the Bashkirs sent to our headquarters a consignment of four railway truckloads of arms, ammunition and equipment captured by them on the

Tashkent front. It was eventually found out that the Bashkirs had unexpectedly attacked a convoy of Bolshevik troops on the railway line in the middle of the steppes, had cut out all the Bolsheviks, captured their material and sent the booty as a present to the Ataman. Similar raids were repeated by the Bashkirs several times after that.

It was just after the visit of the Bashkirs that I was sent post-haste by the Ataman to the railway station, because the railway officials had gone on strike and their Committee had voted not to supply anything more to the front, be it troops, rations, or ammunition, for the Cossacks in the line. The orders of the Ataman were to put an end to the strike and noise among the officials and workmen. On the line was standing a train with rations for the front, all ready to start, but there it stood, abandoned, and nobody seemed to be worrying about getting it off nor about the fact that at the front there were wounded men waiting to be brought back to the town hospitals. The strikers flatly refused to let the train leave the station. I dismounted the Cossacks, posted them at various points and addressed the workmen as follows:

"I am directed by the Ataman to warn you that, unless you resume work and proceed to carry out your duties at once, I am to take drastic measures to compel you to do so. Any one who attempts to create disturbance or interfere with the normal course of the railway traffic will be severely dealt with. And I can assure you that I will enforce his orders without the slightest hesitation. I give you

ten minutes to make up your minds, and take your choice!"

In answer to my announcement one of the foremen advanced towards me with a drawn revolver, using most obscene language and telling me to go to hell. I had no alternative but to stop him with a revolver shot which laid him out clean.

Another man who attempted to damage the throttle and brakes of the engine was hanged on the nearest lamp post. Realising that we were there not to fool about with them but to take action, the workmen sobered down a bit but still refused to let the train go.

Then I forced the driver and stoker on to the engine guarded by two Cossacks and escorted the train out of the station myself. It was not until we were beyond the town that I descended and left the Cossacks to keep the train in motion. On returning I left a Cossack platoon on permanent duty at the station to prevent any attempt of the workmen and officials to go on strike again.

Next morning I went to interview the Ataman with the object of asking him to let me go to the front, the reason of my request being that my second in command was now sufficiently recovered from his wounds to take my place at the head of the Cossacks in town. To my great pleasure the Ataman consented and said that I could go as soon as I liked.

This was already the 22nd of December. On that date the front was at a distance of only eighteen miles from Orenburg and the Red forces, about twenty times as strong as ours, were pressing from all sides

harder and harder every day. We had only one infantry (or rather dismounted cavalry) detachment of eight hundred rifles with a few machine guns, whereas the Bolsheviks had almost a complete army corps with cavalry, field and heavy artillery counting over twenty thousand men. We therefore had no chance. One could even scarcely call it a front, as the operations were carried out solely along the railway line and only at times extended out half a mile each side. It was difficult and unreasonable to go farther into the steppes, the snow being so deep that a man once off the hard road sank to his waist, which naturally made all troop movements impossible.

There was one thing that was absolutely disastrous for us and this was the Bolshevik armoured train, which they brought at times right upon us and simply showered us with machine gun and artillery fire. We had absolutely nothing to protect us from that rain of metal, as it was impossible to dig trenches in the frozen earth.

In the night of the 22nd-23rd of December several men volunteered to go forward and blow up the railway bridge to prevent the return of this most objectionable visitor. The expedition was a success, as the Bolsheviks never fought in the night but always retired in their trains about sixty miles to a town called Buzuluk, the headquarters of their army, either for a comfortable sleep or for a rowdy night of carousal. In the line, which they occupied during the day, they used to leave a small post with two field guns. During the whole of the following day, there

was fierce fighting with varying fortunes. Towards evening we succeeded in advancing about twelve miles and in fortifying as best we could our new position near a railway siding. Here we saw a fearful sight. On the wall of the station was actually crucified a young military cadet belonging to our detachment and only seventeen years of age. He had a few days previously set out with a reconnoitering party, was wounded, and was lost unnoticed in a skirmish between our scouts and the Bolsheviks in the dark of a winter night. The poor devil was nailed to the wall quite naked.

In the evening we held a council of war, to decide on our further action. Taking into consideration the condition under which we were fighting, without cavalry or artillery, there could of course be no question of a serious advance. On the other hand it was frightfully hard to continue to remain on a passive defence.

It is difficult to realise the physical sufferings our men had to endure during these several weeks of day and night exposure to a temperature of from fifteen to thirty-five degrees below zero with constant wind, having scarcely any food and being unable to take off their clothes. The party was gradually diminishing as there was always a certain number of sick and frozen besides the wounded who had to be daily taken to the rear. It was hopeless to continue to resist under such circumstances. The handful of men we had in the line, no matter how valiant and heroic, would have faded away in no time. We could have managed to do something if we had had cavalry

with us; for we should have been able to harass the enemy in his rear and on the flanks, and also send out proper reconnoitering parties, using roundabout country roads. It was not, however, possible to do this on foot through the deep snow.

At the council it was decided to send an officer to the Ataman and ask him to let us have the only two field guns which were at the disposal of the Orenburg garrison, and at least two *sotnias* of Cossacks, even if they had to be drawn from the old men. The council appointed me and two other officers as delegates to interview the Ataman.

We were to start off early next morning, but were prevented from doing so by the fact that the Bolsheviks again began attacking vigorously. So we once more spent the whole day fighting fiercely. The Bolsheviks were very anxious to regain the twelve miles they had previously lost, and we naturally did not want to abandon the area we had captured with such difficulty. The fighting was incessant and during the day we were five times at grips with bayonets. During one of those attacks, a very disagreeable thing happened to me. In the middle of a bayonet charge my rifle broke in half, so I had to throw it away and use only my sword and revolver, which under the circumstances were much less handy than the rifle.

I was all the time wondering about one thing: why was the Bolshevik artillery silent? True, they could not bring up their armoured train within range, because the railway bridge was blown up; but they still had the two field guns which they had left

for the night to screen their retreat towards Buzuluk. They no doubt had been left in the same place, for to withdraw them would have necessitated using the bridge. Fortunately for us they remained silent throughout the day and thus enabled us to retain the area we had captured the day before.

Tired and hungry after the day's battle, the three of us appointed to interview the Ataman at last started for Orenburg with the object of laying before him our critical situation.

At headquarters we were keenly disappointed at finding the Ataman absent. He had gone out of town to one of the neighbouring *stanitza* or Cossack villages where there was some sort of trouble brewing, and was expected back only in the morning. So I went home, rejoicing over the combination of circumstances that enabled me to spend Christmas Eve with my family.

When I turned up everybody was very much astonished to see me and began helping me to take off my armour; for my short fur coat was so rigid with ice that I could stand it on the floor instead of hanging it up. At supper we discussed the situation, and I plainly told my people that only a miracle could prevent the Bolsheviks from occupying the town; that we could not possibly hold the line under the existing circumstances; and therefore, when the town should be surrendered, we should all have to get into sleighs and just rough it through the steppes and try to reach some point on the Siberian railway, as both the lines to Samar and Tashkent were occupied by the Reds. My wife, mother and sisters looked upon

this possibility quite calmly, and only asked me to give them fair warning to enable them to collect all their valuables and the very necessary things.

In spite of the terrible fatigue, I simply could not manage to drop off to sleep that night. I was worried at the thought that leaving the town to the Bolsheviks was only a matter of days, and at the idea that the family in that case would have to undertake a journey through the wilds of the steppes, not knowing where exactly to go. I was still wondering also if it would not somehow be possible to ameliorate our situation at the front.

Towards daylight I succeeded in formulating a plan of my own which I laid before the Ataman right after breakfast.

On arrival at headquarters I found every one there in high spirits over the news which had just been received of the successful fighting of our small detachment on the Tashkent railway, and of our twelve mile advance on the Samara line, which had taken place on the 23rd. But unfortunately we who arrived direct from the Samara front had to disillusion these cheerful souls, who did not realise all the tragedy of our men in the line.

When we were admitted to the Ataman, I began with all my enthusiasm outlining to him my plan. But unfortunately all my hopes of carrying this through were shattered by the order of the Ataman for me to resume the command of the Cossacks in Orenburg, owing to the aggressive attitude of the local Bolsheviks.

With regard to the reinforcements for the front,

the Ataman, after a short consultation with his Chief of Staff, consented to send the two field guns and to try to mobilise old Cossacks from the district with the least possible delay. So at least the main object of my interview with the Ataman had been attained.

There were many extraordinary incidents in that great evil of civil war. That day I saw one of them, which might have seemed almost comical to an outsider; but for us it bore the stamp of the deepest tragedy imaginable. A young, tall, finely built and altogether smart-looking Cossack who had just returned from the German front was standing at attention, absolutely motionless before a small old man, whom one might have called just a bag of bones. It was the young Cossack's father. This old man was with all his might raining blow after blow with his fists and a whip on the young man's face. It was his punishment for having helped the Bolsheviks instead of defending the rights, lands, and families of the Cossacks on his return from the German front.

This was a tragedy, an internal tragedy between the two generations, which split the Cossacks, and, to a certain extent, the ordinary Russian peasantry throughout the Revolution. The old and the new ideas clashed in bitter conflict and there was as strong a revolution between the two generations as there was between the two different classes of society.

On the following day our small artillery unit was sent to the front, and three days later I met over two hundred of the old Cossacks, all mounted and well armed, singing their national songs, riding towards the railway station where a train was waiting to take

them to give a hand to their fellows in the front lines; while the young Cossacks, their sons, who had deserted the German front, were watching their fathers going to fight, without any sympathy and without admiration, just as though they were strangers. It was ineffably sad and heart-breaking to see this.

One of my first jobs in the old rôle was to engineer another surprise party for a meeting which the police informed me was going to take place in the caravansery, an ancient building of Oriental architecture with a mosque in the centre of the inn yard. The members of the meeting were to be prominent local and outside Bolsheviks, some of them even coming from Moscow.

I was very anxious to get hold of them, for, although we had obtained temporary successes at the front, they were nevertheless quite sure that the town would soon fall into their hands and at that meeting they were going to appoint Commissars to various posts in the Civil Administration of the province, and also the President and members of the Extraordinary Commission or Cheka.

We gave them sufficient time to assemble and get well into their affairs before we surrounded the building. I posted sentries at all the doors and, having left a strong detachment of Cossacks in the yard to cut off escape, penetrated into the hall, where the conference was in full swing.

Their first movement was to spring to their feet and try to hide all the confidential papers they had spread on the table, but I shouted: "Hands up, and don't move!" I then approached the three men who

were sitting near the centre of the table, in my opinion representing the presidium of the Conference. One I recognized as a member of the local Bolshevik Committee.

On the table before them I found the papers I wanted containing the names and addresses of persons to be appointed to various administrative posts. Having taken possession of these lists, we began to search the approximately one hundred members of the Conference. Many of them were in possession of revolvers and all sorts of interesting and valuable documents.

Then from the lists I called out the names of all those who were appointed in the administration. They all responded and were sent under escort to the town prison. It will be interesting later to recall that the person appointed as Military Commissar was one Popoff, a local resident and a student of the Petrograd University. I was a long time trying to get him, as he was one of the most energetic and active members of the Orenburg organisation; but he always had the luck of avoiding arrest. Even here he escaped through the chance of not being present at the meeting.

Glancing through the papers which were left on the table, I came across a list of the names of those sentenced to death by the Bolsheviks, and I had the thrill of finding my name among them.

Except the eight men whom I had picked out and sent to prison, I released all of them, as they had committed no crime except that of attending the

conference, which was too small an offence to warrant my creating for myself more enemies.

My chief aim now was to get hold of Popoff, whose photograph I always carried with me; but I must admit that it was not an easy task as he was most careful and plucky. Whenever I located him and tried to corner him, he always succeeded in doing me in by disguising himself in such a way that I could not possibly recognise him. Four times I quite unexpectedly raided his quarters, at different hours each time, and always found him out. Two nights running I watched in disguise beside his house but again without result.

In the meantime the Red Army of the Samara front had repaired the railway bridge and commenced a most energetic advance on our lines, so that notwithstanding the heroic resistance of our small force, we had to withdraw, fighting fiercely over each bit of territory we gave up. Every day there were more and more wounded arriving in Orenburg and the conditions at the front became intolerable.

I asked the Ataman to let me have a locomotive and twenty Cossacks and said that I was ready to undertake to blow up one bridge between the Bolsheviks and the Cossacks and another one in the Bolshevik rear in order to create panic among the Red troops and thus hold up their advance. The Ataman for some reason was unwilling to use his own authority in this manner and so sent me to consult the "Committee for Safeguarding the Country against the Revolution," which I did, but found everybody

so panicstricken that I could not obtain a decisive answer from any of them. The only satisfaction I got was that, in leaving the place in a fit of rage and despair against all those defenders of the revolutionary principles, I broke the glasses on the nose of the President of the Committee, one Rubinstein by name. Thus I never got my locomotive and our men were heroically but vainly dying, trying to hold the little bit of territory which was entrusted to them while the Bolsheviks were pressing harder upon them and creating a wild panic among the population of Orenburg.

Every day the authorities were holding conferences to decide what further action was to be taken. At one of the conferences when I was asked what I thought would be the best plan, I gave a sincere and plain answer and, pointing at the five members of the famous Committee, said:

"Exactly one month ago I warned you, Gentlemen, that these five scoundrels and traitors should either be hanged or shot, because as it now appears, they were all the time in close contact with the most prominent agents and accomplices of the advancing Red Army and even admitted them to clandestine interviews in their houses. The only thing that can and must be done now is to recall all the Cossack troops from the front to avoid further senseless bloodshed, as it is already quite obvious that we will not be able to hold the town and we must therefore try to save as many lives and as much material as possible and withdraw altogether into the wilds of the steppes."

After this declaration I left the conference and joined my Cossacks who were waiting for me in line just outside the building.

By that time the town was already in a state of such indescribable chaos that it made one's head swim. The local Bolsheviks had lost all sense of restraint and cases of murder and pillage occurred every day. To restore and keep order in the town, I was compelled to abandon all moderation in suppressing and punishing the hideous crimes which were every day committed in the most matter of fact way, so that for murder and violation, death on the spot was the punishment without going to any further details of justice. I did not in any way interfere with peaceful demonstrations, but was compelled to fire on the crowd after three warnings in case of a demonstration dangerous to public safety and creating disorder.

CHAPTER VI

THE SWORD OF SHAMYL

IT was from January 13th that the hardest days began. From that date I had to be in the saddle day and night, frequently not having time to eat.

I had arranged with three *yamstchiks* * to be ready in case of emergency, which could now be expected any day, to be prepared to take my mother, wife and sisters and their luggage out of the town. I myself proposed to get away with the Ataman's Staff and Cossacks, thus forming a sort of escort to my family.

The night of the 15th to 16th of January passed in continuous bloody skirmishes with the rabble of the town. At eight o'clock in the morning I was called to headquarters and received an order from the Ataman to post a guard at the headquarters buildings where a military conference was to be held, for it was rumoured that the local Bolsheviks were planning to capture the Ataman's Staff and administrative assistants. I posted patrols at each gate and at the entrance. At about nine o'clock a crowd was beginning to gather and there could be no doubt as to its intentions. When my warnings had no effect, I was obliged to open fire on them. Thus three hundred Cossacks dispersed the crowd three consecutive

* *Yamstchik*—a driver, usually engaged in carrying the mail through the country.

times and yet failed to prevent its gathering a fourth time. There was a considerable number of wounded and dead in this crowd of more than a thousand. Finally at eleven o'clock the conference was over and I was summoned to the Ataman.

"You will be relieved in a few minutes by your second in command with two hundred Cossacks," he said. "You may now go and have a rest, but I will need you again to-day; so be here at four o'clock."

"Has anything definite been decided about leaving the town?" I asked him.

"No," he answered, "nothing definite has yet been decided and all will remain just as it was until further orders. Our men are still holding the line!"

I was wondering on what he was basing such a statement and only afterwards did I learn that an order had already been sent to the front instructing our troops to discontinue fighting and to withdraw along the ice of the river Sakmara towards the village of Kargala, north east of the position occupied, and join the staff of the Ataman in that place.

I went home, had something to eat and, having warned my family that the time had come when they must pack up and be ready for any eventuality, I dropped on the bed and went fast asleep. I had asked my wife to wake me at three-thirty sharp; but her tender feminine heart this time played me a turn that save for a miracle, might have cost my life. Seeing how tired I was and fast asleep, she hadn't the heart to wake me at 3.30 and so let me sleep until nearly seven.

When she told me the hour, I sprang to my feet,

my blood boiling with anger, jumped on my horse and flew like a madman to headquarters. On arrival I was struck by the absolute quiet and emptiness reigning there. There was only one sentry, a Tartar, on patrol at the gate.

"Where's the Ataman?" I flung at him.

"The Ataman? He went off with his Staff at four o'clock. Didn't you know that? Now the power in the town has been taken over by the Tartars." His first word staggered me, but his second cheered me up a little, as I knew that the Tartar population of the town amounted to forty thousand, and that they were strongly opposed to the Revolution and to Bolshevism especially.

"Where are your chiefs?" queried I, having in view, as the only logical issue out of my situation, to offer them my services, being on very friendly terms with the Tartars in general.

"Our chiefs are in the Prison building, right on the other side of the town," answered the sentry. So I went there and found the Prison quite empty and all the prisoners whom I had arrested and put in prison during the last two months released by the local Bolsheviks the moment the Ataman had left the town and before the Tartars had time to establish their guard. In the prison office I found the new man in charge, a Tartar with his six assistants and a guard. They appeared to me to be confused and lost, but they knew me straight away and said:

"We really don't know what to do! It is still uncertain whether we shall be able to hold the town against the Bolsheviks and organise a strong

authority of our own or not. Already they have sent us two colonels and several officers to be held in prison, and we don't know what to do with them!"

To this I responded with an unhesitating command:

"You must let them go at once. I have just seen your new chiefs, from whom I have full authority for their release. Give me the keys of their cells. I shall take the responsibility for all this."

They handed me the keys and I set the officers free. It appeared that they had found themselves in exactly the same position as myself, in that they were not warned that the Cossacks were leaving town and had no possibility of getting away afterwards as all the *yamstchiki,* including the three I had engaged for my family, had been requisitioned for the members of the Ataman's Staff. I advised them to leave the town as soon as they could, even if it were on foot, and hide in the nearest villages, otherwise they would be shot immediately. They were just preparing to go when the prison office was invaded by several Bolsheviks with some more officers and their wives under arrest. Seeing the previously arrested officers released and in my company, they were momentarily perplexed until one of them shouted:

"Get hold of him, it is the chief of the Cossacks; there is an order that he must be shot on sight!"

If I had lost my head and self-control at that moment or shown nervousness and fright we should all have gone behind the bars and to subsequent death; but, although I knew that I was putting my head in a noose, I realised that I had no other option

and therefore coolly overawed the Tartar with the dictum:

"The Bolsheviks have ordered you to shoot me? Very well. But the new Tartar Government and my conscience order me to destroy you. You are using a power which no one has bestowed upon you"—and with those words and my revolver closed the argument. Then with the help of the other officers we rounded up the remaining Bolsheviks, shoved them into the cells and locked them there. This took only about two minutes. Putting the keys in my pocket, I advised the officers to get away at once. The man in charge of the prison stood still there, gaping at me.

With the keys in my possession I hurried out only to find that my horse was no longer where I had left it. Obviously some admirer of Bolshevik principles and the horse had found it good enough for him and appropriated it. So I had to put up with it and walk.

In the streets the Bolsheviks were already at work; a Cossack officer was hanging on a lamp-post, firing was heard from all parts of the town and the sky was lurid with burning houses. I felt a creepy sensation gradually overwhelming me, and my nerves were wrought to their limit.

I found an *izvostchik* * and told him to take me to the Tartar headquarters; I did not want to go home before ascertaining what was the best plan for the future for I did not wish to disturb my family before it was absolutely necessary. Strangely

* *Izvostchik*—cab.

enough, I failed to realise the danger to which I was exposed and somehow didn't think of it.

When I arrived back at the Tartar headquarters, I found the courtyard filled with a crowd of every description. Telling my *izvostchik* to wait, I hurried past the sentry, ran up the main staircase and, with a feeling that I should make a real impression on these Tartars when presenting them the keys of their prison with its Bolshevik inmates, strode with intentional bravado through the door the guard pointed out as that of the Staff—and it was, that of the Bolshevik Staff. It looked as though I meant to do the thing handsomely and bring my record to them on a silver salver sealed with the damning keys jangling in my pocket. The door that I had myself closed behind me appeared for the moment to be life's final portal.

Here in front of me were the men who had been my prisoners; there was also that Tikhon Popoff with whom I had played hare and hounds these many weeks. Through the mutual astonishment that blanketed us all, his well-known, though never seen, face gave the cue for the next move. Drawing out of my pocket the 'photo of him which I always carried there, I said to him:

"At last I have found you, Tikhon Ivanovitch!"

"Yes," he said, "you have found me right enough I admit, but this time you have lost the game!" and addressing the Bolsheviks he ordered: "Comrades, seize him; for he is a most dangerous counter-revolutionary and you all know perfectly well the trouble he has given us!"

I hadn't even time to realise what was happening and draw my revolver, when I was knocked off my feet and crushed by a crowd of armed men from behind. I tried to defend myself but a terrific blow on the head with the butt-end of a rifle knocked me senseless and left me unconscious.

When I came to I heard an awful shouting and the arguing of many voices around me. A few minutes later I realised that it was over me the argument was raging between the Bolsheviks and the Tartars. I made an effort to get up but a sharp pain in my head prevented my doing so. Having noticed that I moved, the crowd again became excited and I heard a frightful clamour of voices in my ears. Then a Tartar officer came up to me and, raising his voice above the noise of the crowd, said:

"Comrades! The power is not yet in your hands. It is still in the hands of the Tartar Government. It is I who am in charge of this building and am responsible before my Government for anything that happens in this place. Therefore it is I who am responsible also for this officer and I here and now place him under arrest for safe custody!" Having said this, he helped me to get up and, while the Bolsheviks were loudly protesting, he took me into the next room and said:

"Give your arms up to me; otherwise I cannot answer for anything that may happen, and then you are lost!"

It was a real tragedy for me to give up my arms and especially my beautiful ancient Damascus blade, but the thought that refusing to give them up might

lessen my chances predominated and I surrendered them up with sadness after all they had been to me. Taking them with him, he went out and locked the door. There I lay all alone, regretting most of all my beloved sword.

The reason of my special regret at parting with that sword was this. Aside from the fact that it was in itself a wonderful piece of work and had rendered me valuable services during the Great War, it had a unique and most interesting history. In former days it had belonged to the great Shamyl, the *Iman* or regional religious leader of Islam for Central Asia, part of Russia and the Caucasus, who in the fifties of last century raised the green flag of Holy War—*Gazavaat*—and fired the country with his fanatic daring.

When in 1859 the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army in the Caucasus, Prince Bariatinsky, defeated his army in the mountains of Daghestan near a village called Gunib, Shamyl was finally surrounded and had to give himself up. He, however, refused to allow anybody to disarm him, and proudly marched straight to Prince Bariatinsky, who awaited him and, taking off his sword, himself proudly handed it to the Prince with these words:

"I cannot and will not allow my sword to pass into unknown or undeserving hands. I, therefore, hand it over to you, a Russian General, who has conquered me and my army." Later on Prince Bariatinsky made a present of it to my grandfather for his collection of arms, where it was kept up to the time when I took it with me to the front in 1914.

CHAPTER VII

EXECUTED!

ABSOLUTELY exhausted, I threw myself on the sofa. My clothes were torn, my body was all sore, and a splitting headache was torturing me. I realised that I was coming to the end of my days and I could not think of anything. I closed my eyes. The row in the next room was still continuing and I clearly heard my name mentioned several times.

There was only one thought in my head; if it is the end, then may it come quickly, as waiting for it was intolerable. Then the thought of my family burned me like a red hot iron. How was it I had been so stupid and not seen through it all before? When the news of the collapse of the Ataman's power reaches my wife she is almost sure to start in search of me and, if she comes here to headquarters, she will doubtlessly also be arrested. This idea was almost driving me mad. I sprang to my feet and began thinking of a way to escape but there was little time to think, and besides not much use in thinking, as there was only one door to the room and this led to the council chamber where the brutes were speculating on my fate. I went up to the window which I found overlooked the yard. Had the latter been empty, I could have jumped even from the second

story as there was a considerable heap of snow just below. But, as the yard was full of Bolsheviks and Tartars, my jumping would not have taken me any further towards freedom. The only thing for me to do was to wait for events to develop and possibly give me a chance.

Several hours passed in this torturing expectancy. The noise in the other room quieted down at times but only for a short while, to begin again with redoubled force. I saw through the window three men stood "against the wall"; a volley, and the poor devils fell on the snow shot dead—a rather disheartening sight for a man in my position! This state of uncertainty was becoming absolutely intolerable, and I was beginning to think again of jumping out of the window, when I heard the noise of the key in the lock. As the door opened, the same Tartar officer came in with Popoff and signalled me to follow them. Popoff began jesting me over the fact that, no matter how I tried, I had always failed to catch him, and assured me that now he would do the utmost to send me into a better world than this. I followed them, dead sure that this was the end and that I would be shot in a few minutes. In the next room I found some more officers who had been arrested and the same crowd of Tartars and Bolsheviks. The Tartar officer said to us:

"We are obliged to give all the power to the Bolsheviks, as we have scarcely any arms and cannot fight against them."

That finished me. I realised there was no escape. Two guards escorted me through the crowd and from

remarks overheard I understood that I was being taken to be shot. As we were making our way through a crowd of Bolsheviks all carrying rifles, I was expecting every minute to have a bayonet stuck in my back,—a very uncomfortable feeling, I must admit. Never in my life shall I forget the sensations of those two or three minutes! The thought that I would be put against the wall in a few seconds was of course somewhat terrifying, but the appalling apprehension of this bayonet thrust was worse; in fact it was so agonising that a cold perspiration was breaking out all over me and I was biting my lips till they bled, trying to overcome the desire to look back, and by this let the Bolsheviks think I was frightened.

I was led through a large yard full of people who saw me off with threats, hoots, and whistles, and was taken into a smaller yard beyond, surrounded with a low fence. Even then I was still thinking of how to escape . . . as they stood me against the wall with my face toward it, apparently intending to shoot me in the back. I refused their arrangement and swung round to face my executioners.

The moonlight was brilliant, the night was quiet and frosty. No words can tell how I loved the world and how I hated to be separated from life at that moment. Visions of home and family hung for a second before me . . . but my thoughts were interrupted by one of the soldiers:

"Well, *Tovaristch,* stand up straight, we've no time to waste with you. Au revoir. Hope to see you soon again."

The rifles went up . . . The moment was ghastly. I saw that they were aiming right at my head. I had an impulse to run, but my limbs were paralysed and would not obey. I heard a voice counting:

"One, two . . . "

After *two* it was black before my eyes and I felt my knees bend instinctively . . . After this I did not see or feel anything. I only seemed to hear something like a shot and I went down with my face in the snow, and remained motionless. When I fell I had only a sensation that a blast of strong hot wind had burnt my face and torn off my *papakha* and that I was falling down a precipice. From somewhere came the words:

"One scoundrel less!" Then everything was a blank.

After an interval, of the length of which I have no measure, I somehow began feeling that I was still living and I seemed to be waiting for someone to come and finish me off as I knew was usually done. But no one came and everything was deadly still and quiet. An idea that they had gone struck my mind like lightning and I half opened my eyes . . . There was not a soul near or anywhere in the little yard. Probably the Bolsheviks were so tired and satiated from the number of people they had shot that evening that they did not even trouble to make sure that I was really dead. The moon had gone and it was pitch dark but I still continued to lie motionless.

I was alive all right, and felt no pain anywhere,

therefore I probably was not even wounded, I simply could not believe it. My heart was throbbing with terrific force at the idea that I was saved by some miracle. Finally I began very carefully to raise my head and look around. The yard was empty.

I sprang up, made the sign of the cross and, not losing a minute, sneaked for the fence with the blood rushing to my head with happiness at having escaped so miraculously. With a bound of joy I cleared it and landed outside—in the arms of two Bolshevik guards!

As life was running then, this was only an "incident." Seeing my officer's shoulder straps, they decided to take me straight to prison. I was delighted with their idea, because, if they had taken me back into headquarters, my musketeers would certainly have made a thorough job of it the second time.

I was racking my brain for some way to escape from my escort, when suddenly I had a happy thought. As a pretext for not walking all the way to the prison I began to limp with one leg and having noticed an *izvostchik* near I declared that I could not walk any further. The two soldiers, who were themselves, I take it, bored at the idea of having to walk such a long distance, gladly consented to ride if I had the money to pay the fare. Some incredible fortune was following me this night for we picked up the very old coachman who had brought me to headquarters. He never gave a sign of recognition as all three of us piled in his sleigh and set sail for prison. We had already gone about halfway when

I told the coachman to stop and offered the soldiers the cigarettes which I knew would be taken away from me at the prison, saying:

"We might as well smoke them as the warder."

They accepted with thanks, and got down on the snow to smoke and warm their feet by pacing round the sleigh. At the moment I did a desperate thing: I snatched the rifle from one of them as he was trying to light his cigarette, lifted it high in the air and let it drop on his head with tremendous force; then I turned round quickly and put the bayonet through the other. They both fell without a single sound.

I jumped back into the sleigh and gasped at the coachman:

"Drive like the devil!"

But instead he quietly got down off the box, came up to the Bolsheviks and gave them one more blow each with the butt of the rifle.

"That's better," he said, "otherwise, God forbid, they might have got up again! I have known you for many years, *Barin,** and also knew your parents!"

Fortunately there was no one within sight and for anyone to find two dead bodies in the street was nothing in those days; one would even take no notice of them. With a sigh of relief and a prayer on my lips I told the coachman to take me home as quickly as he could, though not through the main street, but by a back one.

On my arriving in such a dirty and dishevelled

* The peasants' mode of address for their masters, the equivalent of "sir" or, at times, even "my lord."

condition, my wife, mother and sisters all rushed towards me with a flood of questions:

"Where have you come from? Whatever has happened to you?"

I told them as best I could all that had happened to me during the strenuous evening. They decided unanimously that I must leave Orenburg at once, as it was obvious that my escape would very soon become known and search would be instituted. To this I replied:

"Tonight I will not go anywhere but to bed. Tomorrow, after a good night's rest I shall see what can be done."

I figured that if the Bolsheviks did discover the absence of my mortal self that same night, which was very doubtful, they would search for me anywhere but in my house, as they would not believe that I would have the temerity to sleep at home after all that had happened. Besides, I would not consider going anywhere without my wife, and I could not drag her away with me not knowing how or where I was to flee. Consequently I went to bed and immediately fell asleep from sheer exhaustion. But my wife and mother did not go to bed at all and early next morning my wife awakened me and again implored me to get away; so, having changed into plain clothes, I went across the road to some friends to ask their advice. When they saw me they cried:

"But you are mad to go about the town like this! The Bolsheviks are looking for you all over the place. For God's sake hide quickly somewhere."

I then realised that there was nothing else for it

but to get away and that quickly. But on coming home, I had again a moment of hesitation, seeing which, my wife asked me:

"Look here, if I come with you, will you go?"

After a moment's reflection, I answered:

"Yes, then I'll go!"

With this decision reached, in five minutes I was dressed in the peasant clothes of my soldier servant, and my wife in the similar picturesque garments of her maid with the regular peasant kerchief over her head. We also took their documents, and I completed my disguise by clipping my hair short and shaving off my moustache. Then we were ready to go.

We said goodbye to my mother and sisters and carefully left the house through a back door. My wife's self-control was quite astonishing. Not once throughout these events had she shown any nervousness and all the time tried to be as cheerful as was possible under the circumstances. Her good humour gave me both moral and physical strength all along.

We left the house just in time, as about one hour later it was raided by fifteen armed men who commanded my mother to tell them where I was and to have me delivered over to them. Everybody in the house said that I had probably left the town together with the Ataman and the Cossacks, as no one had seen me since that time.

Walking along the street I was beside myself with trying to think where we were to go and where we could find horses, as we could not walk any distance

in such deep snow. I decided to go around to a hotel where the *izvostchiks* were usually stationed, with the hope of finding the old man who had driven me on the previous evening. It was just our luck—there he was. Recognising me, but without revealing this by more than the comforting twinkle in his eye, he at once consented to take us to a *yamstchik* he knew, who had just returned last night from a trip in the country.

I first went into the hotel for a moment to forewarn the manager, whom I could trust, that I would be sending letters through him to my mother and to ask him to pass them on to her, which he promised to do.

When we arrived at the *yamstchik's* house, we found to our great disappointment that he was not at home. His wife invited us to wait for him inside, explaining that the horses were there, and that her husband would soon be back. We let our *izvostchik* go and were prepared to wait. It was then seven o'clock in the morning of the 17th January 1918.

CHAPTER VIII

OVER THE STEPPES IN FULL FLIGHT

NOW at last we were on our actual journey, and we had decided it was to be for Moscow, if the *yamstchik* would only hurry up!

We had to wait a long while and though our hospitable hostess made us some hot tea to cheer and distract us, our minds were elsewhere. I was constantly looking out through the window,-for what I had discovered outside was arousing my anxiety. The open space just before the house was gradually filling with Red guards, who stood about in small groups and seemed to be consulting about something. Suddenly the door opened and the *yamstchik* came in. At first he refused point blank to take us; but finally, scrutinizing me in a significant way, said:

"Well, all right. Although the horses are tired and it is a dangerous job to start while there are Bolsheviks round the house, I shall see. Wait here, I won't be a minute," and with those words he went out to harness the horses.

Now my one anxiety was to get away from the house before the Bolsheviks should have time to observe us carefully. The *yamstchik* had closed the gates of the yard but through the window the sight was becoming more and more alarming. Apparently the Bolsheviks, who had seen us enter, were growing

suspicious, as they were evidently preparing to surround the house. We both felt dreadfully nervous with this waiting, and one thought was always stinging us: shall we or shall we not have time to get away? But the door opened, the *yamstchik* appeared and said in the whisper of a conspirator:

"Come quickly, if life is dear to you. You have not lost yet."

We packed into the sleigh, a workman opened the gate, and we shot out of the place at full speed. We heard the Bolshevik commands: "Stop! Stop!" and a few shots, but it was already too late. We crouched low and swung round one corner on one runner, then round another, and through a succession of out-of-the-way streets, until we struck the main road that led away for hundreds of miles over the steppes. Having galloped as fast as the horses could foot it for over six miles, the *yamstchik* pulled up and gave his wonderful little animals a chance to rest. The wind was so strong and the cold so bitter that it was impossible to face forward, so that my wife and I had to get right under the rug and, kneeling on the bottom of the sleigh leaned with our elbows on the seat, thus travelling backwards in this position.

In about one hour and a half we came to the first village, where we could change horses and go further; but unfortunately we ran into a frightful snow-storm, called a *buran* on the steppes, so that we could not proceed. We had no option but to put up with it and wait till it was over.

We were given hospitality by a Tartar *yamstchik,* and provided with a small room in his attic. In

that room there was only one tiny bed with a filthy mattress and of course there was nothing like a blanket, pillow or sheets. Though the room had other handicaps that left us far from peaceful and happy, we realised that we would just have to endure them and rough it as the *burans* sometimes lasted for well over a week and no one would venture out into the steppes until they were over. I was unable to leave the house, as Bolsheviks from Orenburg were constantly patrolling through the village, as they had been sent out of all the neighbouring hamlets to net officers in flight.

My nerves were in a horrible condition after those last events in town. I could neither eat nor sleep and had no rest day or night; besides I was all the time worrying about my mother and sisters whom I left there in town. At one time I even planned to go back and it was only my wife's persuasion that made me relinquish the mad idea.

As I needed some medicine from the chemist and could not venture to get it myself, my wife had to go. The moment she came into the street two Red guards followed her right up to the chemist's and even went in with her. Thanks to her costume, and to her acting of the peasant rôle, she succeeded in allaying their suspicions and returned home safely.

It was awfully trying just to sit and wait in this dirty, smelly attic room, dominated by the fear that the Bolsheviks might at any time search the place. The only thing that had a cheering effect on me was my wife's good humour and her absolutely quiet attitude under any and all circumstances. On the

third day at about midnight the *yamstchik* woke us and said:

"Although the wind is still strong, the storm will be over by daybreak, for last evening the dogs were barking at the east; so if you wish to start off safely the horses will be ready in two hours. All the village is fast asleep, and so are the Bolshevik patrols."

We of course gladly welcomed the chance and began to get ready for the journey. This did not take us long, as we had only one cloth bag in which we kept bread, salt, tea and sugar. When we came out the wind was still blowing, though at intervals it was more quiet, which was a good omen and a sign of coming fair weather.

Starting at about 2 a. m. on this next stage of our journey, we both heaved a sigh of relief as the last houses of this village, quite too close to Orenburg, disappeared behind us. We could not go very fast because of the darkness, and the storm which made the air and sky as white and dense as milk. The cold was bitter, enhanced by the snow that covered our faces and filled our eyes, so that three to four miles an hour was all we could do without taking the risk of getting off the road and losing our way. We suffered agonies as we had no proper winter clothing. Our limbs were absolutely numb with cold and at times we could hardly speak. Just before daybreak the wind did finally die down, the snow ceased and stars began to dot the clear cold sky. Two hours later the east became pink and we rejoiced over the warm crimson of the rising sun. The sight was wonderful. The steppes in their white mantle

of snow, gradually changed their colourings as the sun rose, and from the grey-blue and purple trimmings in the ravines, gradually shaded away to light blue and rose; and, when this master colourist had risen about half over the horizon, it became almost a scarlet. Had it not been for the wicked cold, one could have stood and admired this wonderful picture of nature, which in half an hour had run through all the colours of the spectrum.

At last, after several hours of this driving and freezing, we came to a large village where we had to change horses again, and it was with delight that we found ourselves in a well-heated hut with hot tea provided by the Tartar host. Over the tea the proprietor, asked us the natural questions of who we were and where we were going.

Although I was sure that he had no bad intentions and was quite in earnest, I did not consider it wise to tell him the plain truth but gave him a made up story which I kept for such occasions and had told so many times before to inquisitive strangers.

"My usual occupation is horse breeding. I have spent part of the winter at a farm belonging to a relative who lives about sixty miles from Orenburg. Now I am going to Moscow on business, and have to take this uncomfortable and roundabout way, as the railway from Orenburg to Samara has been destroyed by the Bolsheviks."

"And why is it that you are so lightly clad, and have no luggage?" asked our host.

"Oh," said I, without a wink, "when we were already nearing the town, some unknown people,

probably Bolsheviks or very much like them, stopped us and took away all our warm clothes and two travelling cases!"

Then after a moment's reflection, the old man continued:

"Yes," he said, "a lot of harm has been done by those confounded Bolsheviks. And what did they start that game for, I wonder? One would think they had a hard life under the Tsar. You may ask any Mahomedan and he'll always tell you that in the days of the Tsar life was better and that without a Tsar Russia cannot and will not exist!" When we had thanked him and were ready to go, he gave us two warm coats lined with fox, and said:

"According to our religion every guest is sent to us by Allah and we are supposed to see that he is well fed and warmed, and leaves our door content and pleased with all our treatment of him. Therefore, please accept these two coats from me. Take them and, if you like them, you may keep them and Allah go with you. If you do not need them, the *yamstchik* can bring them back; but I cannot let you go away without them."

We were deeply moved and rejoiced as we put on the coats, thanked him heartily once more and started off. We, of course, sent the coats back to the kindly old man by the *yamstchik.*

At the next stop, a big rural centre, *Yamangulova,* a regular post station on one of the great overland mail routes, the Tartars invited us to share their dinner with them. Although the mutton soup was followed by boiled horse meat to which we were not

accustomed, we gladly accepted it and ate with greediness as we had had nothing but tea and stale bread. When we left, our hosts again provided us with *shubas,* or fur coats, which we gratefully received; but despite them we were frightfully cold, as the wind had again increased and the thermometer dropped to about thirty-five degrees below zero. In the first village we reached we purchased a large piece of *koshma,* which is a felt, made of pressed camel's hair about one inch thick, and stood it up in the sleigh before us as a shelter from the terrific wind that was freezing our faces.

I marvelled at my wife's patience and self-control. She never once complained of being cold or uncomfortable, or lost her good temper; on the contrary, seeing that I was anxious about her, she always tried to be jolly and said: "That's nothing, worse things can happen!"

Towards the evening we came to a large Russian village, which happened to be situated at a distance of only eight miles from our estate. I must admit that I was rather frightened of it, as even in peace times and under normal circumstances its peasants had not a good reputation. Now one might expect them to commit the worst of crimes and I dreaded that they might recognize me. We had to stop there, however, to change horses again and, in view of the ever-increasing wind and the lateness of the hour, I was beginning to doubt whether the *yamstchiks* would consent to take us any further that day.

The reality exceeded my worst fears. The *yamstchiks* to whose dwelling we came happened to be

former sailors of our Baltic fleet, which meant that they were the worst and most bloodthirsty types of Bolsheviks. They flatly refused to go anywhere until the next morning, but at the same time they very courteously invited us to have dinner with them and stay the night in their house. There was no way out of it, we had to take this awful risk and stay. Thanks to my shaven moustache and painted eye-brows they did not recognize me.

At table we were twelve in all, two men, three women, five children, my wife and myself. We all had to eat from a common bowl placed in the middle of the table. Just before we sat down to dinner, one of the sailors offered me a glass of vodka saying:

"Comrade, won't you have a glass of vodka, the best of its kind; I only yesterday brought it with me from Depot No. 4, which is on the estate of the M——'s!"—and he pronounced my surname. "Yes," he continued, "that M—— is a coward. How many times the peasants have asked him to come with his family and live there, promising to protect them all; but he is afraid, the scoundrel, and yet he calls himself an officer and, they say, has a St. George's Cross. They're all the same, all rascals, that's a fact." One may imagine what I felt like when I heard such complimentary opinions about myself. The blood rushed to my head and I took the precaution of hiding my face from the sailors so that my changing expression should not give me away, while my wife went to the window and stared out into the darkness. At that moment she gave way

to her nerves because, knowing my disposition, she was afraid that I would lose my temper and burst out with something foolish that might lead to a tragedy. She was right, for I was shaking with fury and in another moment I might have been throttling the impudent beast whose communistic brain could not grasp the fact that an officer cannot disobey orders, and that, being summoned to Orenburg to fight the Bolsheviks, we were not allowed to leave town.

Grasping the situation, my wife complained that she was indisposed and that she would like to go out and get a bit of fresh air; we went out in the wind where she persuaded me to "keep my hair on" and cool down my temper, so as not to risk my neck over a trifle. When we came in the house we asked for some tea which was served to us in about ten minutes. While we were drinking it I suddenly heard two sleighs drive up to the house. The sound gave me the sensation of an electric current going right through my body, and I said to my wife:

"Finish your tea quickly, and let's go in the back room!"

We had only just time to lie down on the bare floor and cover ourselves, head and all, with the *koshma* when we heard several noisy men come into the house.

"*Hozyaine* (landlord)," said a coarse voice, "it appears that you have an officer and his wife sleeping the night here. He is the former chief of a Cossack brigade in Orenburg. Bring him here. We want him."

"What do you mean, *Tovaristch,*" the landlord answered. "Do you really think that I would put up an officer in my house? True, I have a man and his wife sleeping here, but these are of the simple class and his occupation is horsebreeding. I was talking to him all the evening and judging by what he said they are certainly not telling lies.—Oh, but there he is, in person," concluded he, as I appeared in the doorway.

Hearing the conversation from the other room, after a moment's hesitation I got up and, profiting by the meagre light which one candle shed for the three rooms, decided to take the bull by the horns and came straight out towards the two men.

"Look here," said I, with an indignant note in my voice, "what do you mean by disturbing tired-out travellers in the middle of the night and upsetting their rest in this manner?"

"Excuse us, *Tovaristch,* for disturbing you," said the commissar, "but we are on a very serious job: we must find and arrest an important criminal who succeeded in escaping the other day from the clutches of death itself, when he was about to be shot."

I recognized the man who spoke, as he was employed in the Government service in Orenburg, occupying a very unimportant post, and I had seen him there only a few days ago. I was amazed at the ease with which some people alter their convictions. Only one week ago, this man was a fierce anti-Bolshevik and worked with us, whereas now he was helping to run down the very officers before whom he previously almost crawled on all fours. I

gave the commissar a tip to follow me out into the yard where it was pitch-dark.

"I know whom you are after," said I, and began describing to him my own appearance of Orenburg days. "I saw him with his wife just day before yesterday in the village of Mastchok, spoke to them, and found out that they were going eastward, and I think that if you go in that direction you will soon overtake them as they seem to be quite sure that no one will think of following them toward the Kirghiz country and were planning to travel easily." I gave him the names of the villages lying on the supposed route, telling him that I had heard them from—myself!

"I have to thank you very, very much, *Tovaristch,*" said he, "you have made our task much easier, and as soon as it begins to grow light and our horses are a bit rested we shall continue the pursuit," and he gave me a hearty hand shake. Having thus thrown the hounds off the scent, I chuckled over the escapade with my wife and went to sleep with a quiet heart.

CHAPTER IX

OUT FOR MY OWN RANSOM

THE following morning I rose before daybreak and asked one of the *yamstchiks* to get the horses ready as quickly as possible as we were in a hurry to be off. Fortunately the weather was good, though the thermometer persisted in staying around forty-five degrees below zero. When, just before starting, we asked for some hot milk, the landlord asked us how many "inches" we wished. At first we could not understand what he meant by "inches," but he produced a long stick of dense white ice some four inches in diameter, which was milk by the yard. He chopped off about two inches for each of us and, having boiled it, served it to us. We found this was the regular winter method of preserving and selling this excellent milk of the steppes.

As we hares started in our morning tracks, the hounds were still asleep. The distance to the next village was about twenty-six miles and it was a pleasure to do them, as the morning was quite marvellous with another magnificent sunrise.

Towards nine o'clock the wind increased once more and, though the sky was quite clear, we could hardly distinguish our horses through the blinding cloud of extremely fine ice needles which were cut-

ting our faces. Through that blinding frozen snow we reached our next station only by noon.

Here the Tartar *yamstchiks* refused to take us further until the wind had dropped, so that we were again in the hands of the elements, and had to wait from noon on for an indefinite time in one small room with other travellers, among whom were numerous Bolsheviks. In peace time I had come to that village more than once and knew the owner of the house, but he fortunately did not recognize me at first in my disguise.

According to Tartar custom there were no chairs in the room and everybody sat on a beautiful big Persian carpet, on which were served the meals and tea, and which was eventually used as a bed. I felt awfully sleepy after the previous broken night, but I tried to fight it as I had to be constantly on the alert in case I were recognized.

The landlord kept coming into the room and every time stared at me so scrutinizingly, that at length I felt quite uncomfortable and anxious. Finally he came in and said:

"Will you please come out with me? I want to show you something."

When we were alone in another room, he explained:

"I see that you are not at your ease in that room, so I will take you and your wife to my other house, which is at present occupied by my principal wife. There you will be quieter and more comfortable!"

I called my wife and we went to the smaller house situated in another street. It was very cosy, clean

and well-heated. As we came in, he stepped straight up to his writing desk, unlocked a drawer and showed me a revolver with about a hundred rounds of ammunition.

"At present," said he, "one never knows what's going to happen, and when Bolsheviks are about it is always best to have such a little friend close at hand!" nodding significantly. Then, having ordered his old wife to get tea and eggs ready for us, he withdrew.

The room in which we were lodged was an exceptionally clean and cosy one. The floors and walls were covered with magnificent Persian and Bokhara carpets, of most gorgeous colourings. Against one of the walls ran a long sleeping shelf spread with soft carpets and fitted with feather covers and pillows. It was delightful to look at all this and to think that we would have at least one comfortable night after four such horrible ones. Following our modest meal, which seemed to us almost elaborate, we asked for hot water and had a good wash—the first one for many days.

It was long before daybreak when our hospitable host could already be heard preparing our breakfast in the next room. When I turned out I saw that the day was clear though the thermometer showed sixty-one degrees below zero. After a generous breakfast the landlord let us have two lovely great fur coats and, when we were already comfortably seated in the sleigh, brought out from the house an enormous bear skin rug. As he tucked us well in and was saying goodbye, he added:

"If you want to know, I had recognized you perfectly well last night but I said nothing, because I thought it might disturb you. And, knowing who you were, I got everything ready for you, rooms, meal and all the rest, without saying a word to anybody."

Then I realized what he had meant in showing me his revolver. We warmly wished good luck to our kind and thoughtful host and started off, cheered and comforted by this generous Tartar hospitality.

I might mention here that the Tartars were always very warmly disposed to all the members of our family ever since my grandfather had done so much for the welfare of all the Mahomedan tribes in the settlement of their religious and agrarian questions. They even called my grandfather "The Benefactor of the Mahomedans."

We were planning to make our next stop at the country estate of our friend H——, who was Marshal of the Orenburg Nobles. I hoped to stop at his place for at least twenty-four hours to enable my wife to have a good rest, a change of clothes and a sleep for at least one night in a proper and comfortable bed with sheets and a pillow. H—— received us with his characteristically warm hospitality and his wife at once arranged that hot baths and a good dinner be prepared. Our hosts questioned us on all the events of the recent days and we discussed the everlasting problems of the Revolution.

After a wonderful rest in this oasis of the desert of Bolshevism we were called by our host himself at four o'clock. He was a great horse lover and

had a fine stud on his estate. Knowing my love for horses also, he, in spite of the early hour, ordered his eight finest animals to be led past for me to see in the moonlight, for it was not yet daybreak.

At five o'clock sharp we were on our way speeding along behind some of his fine, big horses, which took us over the twenty-six miles to the next station by eight o'clock.

This post was situated at the border of a very large village, another district centre. The moment we approached the house of the new *yamstchik,* he hurried out to say:

"Today I have no horses. I only came home late last night and my animals are tired." I was disgusted at the thought of having to lose a day and spend another night in a dirty peasant house while the weather was so favourable for another good day's journey. However, it was no use sitting outside in the cold, so we went into the house to have tea and warm ourselves. While I was taking my coat off, the *yamstchik* was intently gazing at me, and when I had finished, he suddenly burst out:

"Good Lord! Is it possible that this is really you? I was watching you all the time but could not believe my eyes!"

"Yes, it's myself, all right," I answered. "And how is it, Paul, that you recognized me after these ten years?"

"Not ten, but twelve," he replied. "Do you remember how twelve years ago, you and I had tea at the river, and afterwards had a swimming competition across it?"

"Yes, Paul, I remember that distinctly, but mind you, I don't want a soul to know who I am. You can understand for yourself, the times we are living through now!"

"Don't worry about that," said he reassuringly, "I understand well what you mean, and nobody will hear a single word from me."

"Thanks, old man. And what about horses?" queried I.

"Well," he said, "if you care to wait about three hours, I'll feed them, and then take you wherever you wish to go."

Just as we were sitting down to tea once again H———'s coachman brought in a big wooden box and began drawing from it all kinds of eatables, tea, sugar, butter, a whole leg of mutton, pies, a bottle of red wine and what gave me most pleasure, a bottle of very old vodka. The surprise was exceedingly agreeable and when we had finished our meal and the horses had had theirs, we went off again with a pleasant feeling from the thought that now we had sufficient food to carry on for a while.

Paul showed his evident pleasure at our meeting by the speed at which he was taking us. He was always known for his fast driving, but it is hard to believe that he covered the twenty-five miles to the next station in an hour and fifty minutes. And this too was over those single track roads of the Orenburg steppes, where the peasant teams are always driven tandem and the road is consequently narrow and not to be deviated from because the snow is often from six to eight feet deep.

The station was really the most awful of any we had yet struck. The house consisted of two rooms; the principal or so-called guest room of only a few square yards in size and the second room of even smaller dimensions. Half of the first room was taken up with a sleeping shelf about two feet above the ground. The walls were hung with harness recently greased with stinking tar.

The family of the landlord consisted of the master, two wives, three children, four lambs, two goats, one calf, three cats and two dogs. I don't know whether the rats, mice and other undesirables were also considered as members of the family, but their presence was indisputable.

Having had supper we all laid ourselves on the shelf in the following order: next to the wall, the landlord's son; then the father, the daughter, her mother, myself and next to the wall my wife. The other wife and child, whose places we had taken, boarded out somewhere for the night. As soon as the light was out all the human members of the family let us know that they were asleep by their frantic snoring, almost sufficient to make the walls tremble. The four lambs who remained at liberty during the night started a game of leap frog about the room, and occasionally on us. As there was too much noise to think of sleep in the room, my wife and I considered passing the night in the sleigh; but, on going out to reconnoiter, I found the cold too bitter to dare venture it. However, I got hold of a whip which I used to chase away the lambs when in the intervals between chukkahs they came up and chewed our boots

that overhung the narrow shelf. Shortly after the lambs subsided, the rats and mice began their round; and then the cats rose up to drive them away, to the apparent disgust of the dogs, who took the trail of the cats with barks and growls. This infernal row finally woke the calf and goats who began to expres their discontent in their own language, and then the gymkhana-symphony was complete. The most marvellous feature of it all was that it did not affect the sleep of the landlord's family. At length I lost patience and with my whip subdued all the performers and finally, tired to exhaustion, we dropped to sleep. How long I slept, I could not say, but suddenly I was awakened by a blow in the ribs and heard the terrified murmur of my wife:

"For God's sake, strike a match quickly and see what's on my eye!"

I struck a match and looked. In spite of the tragedy of the situation, I could not help bursting into laughter at the appearance she presented. Her right eye was squinted, though normal, but on her left one, which she dared not move, there was quietly resting an enormous black cockroach. I took him off but after this sleep returned to us no more.

It was then four o'clock; so I woke the *yamstchik* and told him to get the horses ready, as the morning was still and as we had to cover nearly one hundred miles before nightfall. The *yamstchik* did not like the idea of turning out early and dawdled around for an hour and a half in getting ready. He was a bad driver and his horses miserable beasts. That day we were to pass through a town called Sterlitamak, a

district centre which had already been captured by the Bolsheviks; and, as it was more than possible that outposts had been sent out by the Bolsheviks from Orenburg, I was very anxious. Luck favoured us again. While we were driving slowly in the dark about ten miles from Sterlitamak, we were suddenly overhauled by a group of sleighs whose occupants whistled and shouted to us:

"Stop, if you value your lives!"

However, we did not stop, only slowed down. All at once I felt a heavy hand grab me by the collar and a voice:

"Didn't you hear my orders to stop?"

"Why should I? You have no authority over me," I answered, wrenching myself loose from his grasp and standing up in the sleigh. In the meantime two of the others had seized our horses' heads.

"Who are you? Where are you from and where are you going?" were questions addressed to us, as is usual in such cases. I had to tell him my regular little story, that I was returning with my wife from visiting a relative, that I was a horseman, and so on.

"I am a representative of the new Government, the 'Soviet of the People's Commissars,' and am ordered by that Government to trace and arrest an officer who was the chief of the Cossack brigade in Orenburg under Ataman Dutoff and who escaped from prison a few days ago," he declared in a grave manner.

"I'm very glad, *Tovaristch,*" said I, "that you and I have met as I know him very well and shall with the greatest pleasure take any opportunity that pre-

sents itself to pay him back for all the bad turns he did us. Only yesterday we were overtaken by him on the road, but I had no weapon and therefore could not stop him and shoot him like a dog. If I had had a revolver, believe me that he would never have escaped me!"

"Poor new rulers of Russia! What fools you are, and how easy it is to deceive you," I thought to myself, as I received a revolver and a stock of ammunition from those Bolshevik Commissars and was invited to join their party to help them catch a runaway officer whom they had surrounded—and armed! They admitted that they did not know the officer by sight or at least could not remember his face out of the hundreds of those they had shot or imprisoned. This fact was a very propitious one for me, and I assured them that I remembered the officer's face so well that I could pick him out from a thousand.

The Bolsheviks had six sleighs and, as we continued, ours was placed midway in the column. This was probably done out of the precaution which accompanies every act of the Bolsheviks. By their attitude they were all the time doing their best to make me angry, thinking that if I lost control of my temper, I might flare up and give something away or say something against the Bolsheviks which I would not have done in a normal frame of mind. I must say that there was a moment when they were not far gone from attaining their object, and might have if it had not been for my wife who was doing her best to keep me cool. At the outskirts of the town, the

leading sleigh stopped and one of the men, the same one who had addressed me before, the Commissar's envoy, came up to me and said:

"Now we must go to the local Soviet of the People's Commissars and in the meantime I request you to visit the hotels and tea rooms of the town to try to strike the trail of that officer. Perhaps some of the hotel managers or tea-room keepers have lately seen him and might know which way he has gone, if he has left the town. If you succeed in running him down you will receive a big reward." I promised to do my best, and went off.

Having had a comfortable tea and secured fresh horses, I went in about half an hour to the Soviet and reported as follows to my new friends:

"The officer whom you are after left the town about four hours ago and went straight to Ufa and I am starting in a few minutes to try to catch him. You may be sure that if I overtake him, he will not slip through my fingers this time." They were all very much pleased that I undertook to help them, as I knew the officer and they did not.

At times it was all I could do to keep from laughing. I was tremendously pleased at discovering the traits of a comedian which I apparently had in me, though I must say that, had it not been for my wife, I am afraid I could never have played the part right through to the end and possibly might have given myself away.

My mission ended, I left them discussing the means of taking the unfortunate officer back to Orenburg while the officer himself settled down in his

sleigh and headed straight west for the railroad sixty miles away. I threatened our *yamstchik* with a beating if he did not make time and I must say that he did his best. Everything seemed now in order with my pursuers on a false trail northward, and myself heading west.

CHAPTER X

A TARTAR WEDDING

WHEN we had gone about ten miles, we ran into another snow-storm which proved to be the worst we encountered throughout the journey. Our road followed along a chain of small hills and, owing to the storm, it was almost impossible to distinguish it. All the snow was blown away, leaving the bare ground so that the winter road of packed snow did not exist and the permanent summer road was miles away. The cold was very bitter, and we again had to screen ourselves from the wind with the *koshma.* That storm made me very anxious, and I was constantly worried about my wife. It grew so thick that I could not distinguish the leading horse. The fact that our *yamstchik* was an inexperienced youth of about seventeen added to my anxiety. I was staring in front of me trying to make out the road, but it was quite impossible to see any trace of it. When my wife kept on asking me if I could see the road, I grew so nervous that in reply to one of her questions, I snapped at her:

"Yes, I can, but for God's sake keep quiet!"

She became silent, but in ten minutes, I heard her saying in a suffering and beseeching voice:

"I'm freezing, don't be angry with me, but if you

don't let me have a drop of vodka I shall not reach the next station alive!" I dug out the vodka from under the seat at once, and it was the first time in my life that I saw my wife drink straight from a bottle. When we had at last reached the first village, I told the *yamstchik* to stop at the nearest house so that we could go in and warm ourselves and rest for at least half an hour. He answered that he would but continued to drive past the houses. We were absolutely frozen, and I twice asked the *yamstchik* when he proposed to stop but got no reply. Then I lost my temper and, pointing my revolver at his head, I shouted:

"If you don't stop at the next decent looking house, I'll blow your brains out!"

This had its effect and he turned towards the nearest house and drove into the yard. We tumbled out of the sleigh as quickly as our frozen feet would permit and bolted into the house. A delightful warmth overflowed us, but our feet were so cold that we took off our *valenki* (snow boots) and climbed up on the spacious Russian stove to warm our feet on the hot bricks.

There were several people sitting at the table, apparently having their dinner. From my perch on the stove I was trying to catch their conversation and thus make out what sort of folk they were.

I very soon discovered that they were all commissars and were speaking in the usual Bolshevik tongue, saying all sorts of things that made my blood boil with anger. I wished that I had met them under different circumstances where I could have

given an outlet to all the wrath that had accumulated in my soul during the past two and a half months. But I had to keep quiet, as anything else were suicide.

Having warmed ourselves sufficiently, we started off. The snow-storm was still increasing in violence so I entirely covered my wife with the *koshma,* and continued to try to make out the road, which was mere guess work. To reassure my wife I kept on repeating that I knew the road and that we were going the right way although the only thing I really knew was the general direction which I believed we were keeping fairly well. Even this I could only tell by the wind which, being north, was bound to blow from our right as we were travelling west; but it might change at any moment.

The horses could not go off a walk for fear of losing the way. At last, towards the evening we somehow got as far as the Tartar village of . . . after having gone through the sufferings of cold, hunger and the anxiety of losing our way. From this village to the railway was only a short run. The Tartars gave us this time a nice clean room decorated as usual with carpets. After we had washed, the host, an old Tartar, came to our room and announced in a mixture of Tartar and Russian that they were going to have a celebration that evening on the occasion of the marriage of his eldest son, and invited us to participate in the festivities which would take place after the religious ceremony. We accepted cordially his kind invitation, which was all the more welcome to us, knowing well the attitude of the Tartars

towards the Bolsheviks, and I thought I might disclose my name to the host, without any danger whatsoever. When I did so the old Tartar grasped my hands in his and nearly shook them off saying that, if I was hard pressed, I should remain with him as his guest, and that I could be quite sure the Mahomedans would always protect me and prevent anyone finding out that I was among them, all of which, he added, was due me from the Tartars as the grandson of the man who had done so much for them in the days long passed.

We were not invited to the religious ceremony but had our previous knowledge of Tartar weddings confirmed by this one insofar as the item of greatest interest to a non-Tartar is that only the bridegroom goes to the Mosque while the bride remains at home in great expectation.

After the return of the groom and his guests from the Mosque, we came to the table piled high with every sort of Tartar delicacy. The room was crowded with as many people in it as it could hold. Among all the interesting sights, that which most impressed us was the gorgeous attire of the Tartar women, whose costumes were little short of marvellous. Over thin, oriental baggy silk trousers and their dresses, they wore sleeveless jackets like the French "figaro" but entirely covered with Russian silver and gold coins perforated and linked together with the links sewed to the material. On one of the women I noticed among other coins one fifty kopeck gold piece from the time of Peter the Great, a coin which at present is very rare and highly valued.

After the meal when the host came over to me to have a talk, I expressed my admiration for the women's costumes. In answer to what I had said he shook his head and confided to me with a mixture of sorrow and pride in his voice:

"Do you know, Sir, if the Tsar or anybody in his name had ordered us to raise money, the Tartars of this village alone could load about 30 limbers with gold and silver coins; and, if the money should be collected throughout the whole of the Tartar district, there would be sufficient to buy the whole lot of the present rulers of Russia—but we don't want to do it without a Tsar. The Tsar was thoughtful of our destiny, whereas these scoundrels think only of their own pockets. In the meantime we have hidden all our silver and gold in such places that none of these rascals will be able to find it. And remember my words, Sir, there will come a time when a Russian Tsar will be grateful to his Mahomedan subjects. If ever you find life too hard for you, come back to us with your family and live here, and I swear to you on the Koran, while you are with us no one shall ever harm you or any member of your family. You may take my word for it." Both my wife and I were very much moved and affected by these words of our host and by the thoughtfulness and cordiality expressed in them.

When, worn with our journey, we wished to go to rest, we were taken by our host to our bed room, also richly decked with carpets and various other oriental tapestries. In our fatigue it was a great comfort to stretch out on the soft pillows.

About four in the morning we were awakened by the young husband who warned us that, if we wanted to be in time for our train we must arise at once. He went off to get the horses ready while his young bride prepared the breakfast. Shortly afterwards the old father made his appearance and explained:

"As you are our honoured guests, it is the young couple who, in keeping with our Tartar customs, must look after you and see that you leave the house satisfied with our reception, well-fed and warm. Therefore please overlook the fact that it is not myself who am arranging things and getting everything ready. I am quite confident that they will look after you very well but, if there is anything that you desire, just tell me and I shall see that you have it."

The son, however, fulfilled our every wish and in an hour's time we were once again in our sleigh, so that by seven o'clock we had safely reached the railway at a station called Raievka about forty miles southwest of Ufa. Thus we had travelled with horses a distance of over four hundred miles in seven days through most bitter cold and almost uninterrupted snow-storms.

The distance covered each day varied greatly, dependent on weather, the quality of the horses, and especially the frequency with which we could make the changes in our steeds.

CHAPTER XI

LEAVING MY COAT TAILS

AT the station we at once booked our tickets for Moscow and my wife went out for a stroll on the platform, while I continued over my coffee and a book in the buffet while waiting for the train.

In a few moments I heard the noise of an arriving train and the familiar loud talk of Red Army soldiers. The door opened and, as I lifted my eyes to see who had come on the train, I was clutched by emotion; for there stood Popoff in body and soul, the same Popoff who had once sent me to the death from which I had so miraculously escaped. I felt the hair on my head stand up. My first thought was that this time I was lost, for miracles do not often happen twice in this world to the same individual, but I suddenly remembered that I was in possession of a revolver and that thought had a calming effect on me. Then I realized that whatever happened I could do nothing against a whole company of Red Guards and that only coolness and self-control could save me; so I pulled my fur cap down over my eyes and held my book close to my face and sat quiet.

But it was a false tranquillity for my heart had gone to my heels and would have gone farther if it only could have. In the meantime Popoff ordered

coffee and, fortunately not taking any notice of me or of any one else in the room, sat down exactly opposite me at the table, where I was motionless and almost senseless. At this moment my wife entered and at once saw that something was wrong. She happily didn't say anything and simply sat down beside me with her back towards Popoff.

It seemed purely our wonderful luck that in a few minutes the bell rang and we heard an awful row on the platform which caused Popoff as head of the company to rise and go out to see what was the trouble. He at once restored order among his Red soldiers and jumped into a first class carriage as the train, thank God, left the station. Naturally Popoff in conformity with Bolshevik practice did not pay for his coffee, the principle being that "everything is the people's property."

When the train had gone a Tartar waiter came up to our table, looked at Popoff's unfinished glass of coffee and waved his hand.

"What's the matter?" I queried.

"May they be cursed, that scoundrelly lot of Bolsheviks! Look at this. He ordered coffee and refused to pay for it, saying that now everything is the people's. After all it's not from a well that we get our supply of coffee. This people's liberty means total ruin for us!" the waiter burst out in undisguised fury.

"But who is that man," I continued, "who just now had his coffee here?"

"Oh, he is a well known Bolshevik of the educated type who now occupies the post of Military commis-

sar in Orenburg and is a perfect brute, not a human being. Yet he calls himself a War Minister!" The man spat on the floor in contempt and disgust.

"In my opinion he's no minister but a . . . !"

We had to wait for our train many more hours and were bored and anxious, fearing that it might not come that day; finally it did arrive and we climbed into the first available carriage which happened to be one of the second class. A sight it was! An ordinary cattle truck would look cleaner and better kept than this. The corridor of the carriage, as well as all the compartments, was jammed with Red soldiers who filled the air with the most obscene language and vilest expressions that could ever be dreamed. The men had lost all sense of shame and even that of the respect ordinarily accorded a woman.

As there was no place to sit, we stood until our feet simply refused to hold us and then sat right down on the floor in the corridor. My wife was longing for a smoke but her peasant attire prevented her from having one as no peasant women smoke in Russia and her doing so might therefore appear unnatural to our companions. Consequently we had to use a certain amount of ruse to permit her to do so. I gave a sign to my wife and asked her:

"Well, is your tooth still paining you?"

"Indeed it is. It is terrible!"

"Tovaristch," I heard from one of my neighbours, "just let her smoke a cigarette. As soon as the smoke reaches the tooth, the pain ceases almost instantly."

I offered my wife a cigarette but she, playing the game, refused, saying that she could not bear the

taste of the smoke in her mouth which made her feel sick. But I insisted and in the end she took a cigarette, making awful faces and showing everyone how disgusting the smoke was to her when in reality she was as pleased as Punch.

As we were dead from want of sleep I finally succeeded toward evening, emphasizing her unbearable tooth-ache, in fixing up my wife on a bench in one of the compartments, while I lay down on the floor in the corridor and dropped off in a second.

The night passed fairly quietly and without any trouble, except for the fact that I once woke in the middle of the night with a bad pain in my nose. I opened my eyes but, finding nothing unusual around me which could account for the pain, and being still terribly sleepy, I turned over and was off again at once.

Early in the morning I woke up just in time, as in half an hour we were due at Sumara where it was announced that the Bolshevik authorities would inspect the documents of all the passengers. When I sat up, I still felt the pain in my nose and also found it swollen considerably. Everyone was laughing at the sight I presented.

"Well, *Tovaristch,* you *are* an extraordinary sleeper! In the night, a soldier stepped on your very nose, but you didn't even wink at it! You are wonderful."

Hearing this I looked myself up in a glass and discovered that the right side of my nose was badly scratched and all black and blue.

At Sumara the much feared inspection passed

without incident. In about two hours we crossed the long bridge over the Volga and arrived in Sizran, where I heaved a sigh of relief at the thought that we were at last safe on the western bank of this great river, where I was not known to anyone.

Here we had to change trains and wait eight hours for the next at 4 p.m. The station building was absolutely crammed with Red soldiers and sailors, and various other specimens of the Bolshevik creed. It was with difficulty that we made our way through that unearthly looking crowd of ruffians. However, I finally succeeded in securing for my wife a place at the table, and remained standing at the back of her chair.

"What luck," thought I, "that we are at last on this side of the river and there is nothing more to fear."

But my rejoicing was not very long, as I suddenly felt some one touching my arm and saying:

"How are you, *Tovaristch*?"

I quickly turned round and saw before me a typical Bolshevik, who looked straight at me with a cynical smile.

"Do you not recognize me, *Tovaristch*?" he went on, as my confusion was increasing.

"No," said I blankly, "I do not recognize you! Where on earth did we meet?"

"Oh, only about two weeks ago in Orenburg. Don't you remember?" said he, keeping a scrutinising eye on me and following the sudden change in my expression. I must admit that he probably saw something approaching terror in my face, as I felt

decidedly shaky and was most upset by this unforeseen encounter.

"But where did we meet?" I continued, pulling myself together and trying to assume a calm exterior at any rate. "Was it in the club, in a hotel, or a theatre?"

"No-o!" said he saucily, "it was in a public tea-room on the outskirts of the town, when you came along with your Cossacks to make a search and, finding me there, questioned me with your revolver at my temple for two or three minutes. Can't you remember?"

I looked around in irritation and fear to see whether anybody had heard my friend's last words which would have meant an outright death sentence for me; but fortunately all were busy with their own conversations and nobody took any notice of us. I glanced quickly at my wife and noticed that she had stopped drinking her coffee, and without turning her head had closely followed our conversation. I did not know what to do or what to say!

"And may I ask what is your name?" I finally managed to get out, trying to look cheerful.

"Lieutenant Soldatenkoff!" came the answer. "Let us get out of this place for a second. I have something important to tell you!"

I bent over to my wife and whispered:

"Remain here until I return."

Then I went out with Soldatenkoff whom I simply could not recall. I hadn't the slightest idea who he was, where he was leading me or what he intended

to do with me and felt "God only knows what he has on his mind."

When we were in the street, he stopped and said:

"Do not be astonished at the way I spoke to you in the station. I am Lieutenant Soldatenkoff and am running away from Orenburg just as you are. My conversation with you was only a revenge I enjoyed in return for the few minutes during which you threatened me with your revolver!"

Only then did I suddenly remember that this was the man with the three documents whom I thought of a suspicious character during the night search in the west end of Orenburg. It was for me a very unexpected turn of the conversation. He had wanted to pay me back and, by Jove, he did it for he could not have found a better moment for his gibe.

"Tell me, please, where are you going and by which train are you leaving?" he continued.

"My train is leaving this station at four o'clock for the West," said I. "Why do you ask?"

"Don't ever think of waiting for that train!" he urged. "If you do, you are lost. You are being pursued and in this very station there is a detachment of Red troops which was specially sent up from Orenburg to catch you. I know all about it for I heard them talking. They cannot and will not forgive you your position and acts in Orenburg and the way you fooled them in escaping. If they lay hands on you once again believe me their vengeance will be terrible."

After a pause he added:

"Take my advice and don't wait for that train. In a few minutes that one below there will leave for Moscow over a different route. Call your wife and get into it at once for that is the only way for you out of this tight hole."

It didn't take him long to persuade me and I ran at once to tell my wife. It was nearly too late; for it had become known to the Bolsheviks that I was in the station among the passengers and a great excitement had stirred up the crowd. I fought my way through to my wife, threw some money for the coffee on the table and told her to run for it. She sprang to her feet and we struggled out to the platform. Once outside we ran for the train which was standing a short distance down the track. Behind us we heard the cries and footsteps of people pursuing us. The train was whistling and, just as I was pushing my wife up into the carriage, already in motion, I heard two shots fired. But we made it safely, thanks to the aid of two soldiers who were standing on the platform of the car and who from their appearance were evidently two sergeants of an old guard regiment. They were neatly dressed and were obliging and polite, a rare quality to find in the soldiers of those days and evidence of the fact that they were not infected by the general disease of Bolshevism. Our pursuers tried to scramble up after us but the first two met such strong resistance from the heavy boots of the sergeants that they were thrown a good distance back. Seeing this, the others did not attempt to make it and we were given another lease of life. It was only in the train that we re-

covered our normal state of mind and appreciated fully the real danger to which we had just been exposed.

We discovered that Soldatenkoff and his wife had also made their way into the fourth class carriage which already had as many people as it could hold; but, in spite of this, we were given sufficient place to spread our coats and stretch ourselves out on them.

I would not swear to it but I am almost sure that the sergeants who helped us in understood we were not the people we pretended to be but that I was a refugee officer inasmuch as they paid us every attention and constantly rendered us services throughout the whole four days of our journey. I remember one example of their delicate tact which struck me most forcibly: on one of the upper bunks a very disreputable and dirty looking soldier was travelling, who was constantly singing and telling most objectionable stories. I was disgusted with his speaking thus in the presence of my wife and the sergeants, noticing my quandary, ordered him to be quiet saying:

"You had better hold your tongue, you dirty pig, there are people here who do not relish such filth!"

But as this warning had no effect upon the ruffian, the sergeants pulled him off his shelf at the first stop and landed him on the platform of the station without further comment.

During this trip there was one thing which my wife and I several times caught ourselves doing that might have brought very awkward results for us. Whenever we wished to say anything we did not

want others to understand we invariably spoke English or French which was absurd considering our peasant rôle and costumes. Some of our fellow travellers noticed this and asked what lingo we were speaking. My wife found herself at once and calmly answered: "Lettish!" These neighbours were a railway workman and his illiterate wife who was all the time endeavouring to entertain us with pleasant conversation and insisted upon addressing my wife as *"Tovaristch-Madame."*

Thus we travelled four days and nights with no incidents worth mentioning save the tension of the numerous document inspections and a statement made by one of the commissars that they were looking for a man called M—— in compliance with telegraphic orders received from Sizran. Owing to the fact that my documents were made out in the name of my servant, Soboleff, they passed me and left me once more to breathe for a spell.

At one of the stations an elderly peasant came aboard and, after settling down, started a lively political discussion.

"Yes," he began, "all this Revolution and Bolshevism are the results of the war and the war began for the following reason. The Russian and the German Tsars found that they had too many subjects to look after, so they decided between themselves to start a war and said: 'Our soldiers will fight and kill each other as much as they can. Then we shall have fewer people and more land!'"

"Who told you that?" I asked him.

"Oh," he explained, "a very educated man came

once to our village and told us that people should not consent to go to the war as it was only the Tsars who had agreed between themselves to destroy as many people as they could!"

It is a deplorable fact that this was one of the arguments of the propaganda against war.

On the fourth day we arrived at a junction station in the government of Tula, where we decided to change our train for one which in half an hour was going direct to Moscow. When we went into the station to inquire about the Moscow train, a station official answered my queries with:

"Tonight there are two more trains to Moscow but you need not think of trying to board either of them. They are both crowded with deserters from the German front and they will never let you get in. If you try to enter by force I warn you that they will simply shoot you."

In the meantime our train had left. When the first of the direct trains pulled in, I proved the truth of the station official's warning by trying for a place in it. When I went up to the platform of one of the cars and asked a soldier whether there was place for two passengers, the only reply I received was a boot in my chest, a blow so strong that it started a violent attack of coughing, doubly painful for me with the seven broken ribs and the perforated left lung which I had brought back with me from the German front. After this unsuccessful attempt I went back and told my wife about my experience. She was in despair but there was

nothing we could do save wait for the next train that was scheduled to arrive in about two hours.

The waiting room in the station was so full of peasants and Red soldiers that there was not a place for even our hand bag and to find room for my wife to sit down was quite out of the question.

Among the crowd there were a lot of peasants from the estate of my wife's sister which was only about sixteen miles away from this station. As I had spent two summers there before the war and did not know the present attitude of these peasants towards the Revolution and Bolshevism, I was afraid that I might be recognised by them and thus get into trouble.

When the next train came along we found we could not possibly board this either and that we should have to remain at this station the whole night to wait for the morning train. This was doubly trying, since we could neither sit down anywhere nor even get any tea as the Red soldiers monopolized everything and would not allow the ordinary passengers except those they knew personally to approach the refreshment counter of the station.

I made up my mind not to pass the night in that drunken and filthy crowd and went to the station master to ask his permission to remain in his office for the sake of my wife. I had known that good old man since 1914 and was not afraid of him if he should recognise me, being sure of his political views. So I approached him and began my conversation thus:

"Nowadays not everyone is what he pretends to be." He swiftly scrutinised me and said:

"Did you not come to see me several times about four years ago and were you not living on the estate of L——?"

When I answered in the affirmative, he was so pleased that he at once gave me permission to bring my wife and wait through the night in his room and placed at her disposal a large sofa, while I lay on the floor with a log of wood and my cap for bolster and pillow.

Early in the morning the assistant station master advised us to catch the first train and go back to the last station about fifteen miles away, because it would be almost impossible to board the Moscow train at this station owing to the indubitable fighting qualities of the Red soldiers when assaulting a train. Of course we followed his advice and took the first train that came into the station. Unfortunately it happened to be a freight train and with the trucks closed we had no option but to ride on the buffers, which was of course anything but comfortable for a journey of fifteen miles through the cold. Happily the train went at a very slow speed and we reached the next station safely.

There we waited for another hour before finally securing places in a cattle truck of a train which originated at that station and climbed up on to a top bunk which was merely a plank well up against the ceiling. When the train started there were only seven people in our truck and these were quiet and modest; but by noon of the following day the num-

ber went up to 137 instead of the 40 for which the car was officially listed. In these conditions we travelled to Moscow, which we reached about eight o'clock in the evening. As our passengers were principally *Meshetchniks* (profiteering bag-carriers smuggling forbidden food products from the country) our train was met with a shower of bullets as it was slowing down for the station, for these *meshetchniks* were jumping off and running for their lives before they arrived in the station, where they could look foward not only to having their bags taken away from them but probably to being beaten to death as well. The result was that when we finally drew up in the station, there were not more than twenty-five people left in the car. The whole train was at once encircled by a detachment of Red guards who continued firing into the air.

All the passengers were then driven into a corner of the station and searched in a most rough manner with no respect or delicacy shown the women, a procedure that held us up for an hour. At last in the streets of that Moscow from which we had so gladly escaped but a few weeks previously and to which we now returned with an equal or even greater feeling of relief, we realised how our national debacle and our changed estate could alter our standards. But we had little time or inclination for reflection and hurried to secure an *isvostchik* to drive us to my mother-in-law's apartment.

The meeting was an extraordinarily dramatic one. We had quite forgotten that we were dressed as ordinary peasant folk and burst into the drawing

room where my wife's mother, aunts and brother were sitting.

At the first instant they were shocked and frightened at seeing peasants enter the drawing room at eleven o'clock at night; but when they found who we were there was no end to their astonishment and pleasure. Aside from our great joy and relief at finding my wife's people alive and well, we had a feeling of lightness in our hearts at the thought that, so long as I should keep quiet and not mix in political affairs, I might consider myself fairly safe in Moscow and we could both take a well-deserved rest after the incessant physical and mental strain of the last two months.

CHAPTER XII

SELLING MY SOUL FOR GASOLENE

FROM the accounts of my brother-in-law and from what I myself saw during the first few days in Moscow, I formed a very unfavourable impression of the whole situation.

The only people who could enjoy life and liberty in Moscow were those who had no self-respect and no courage in their own opinions. Any person who did not crawl on all fours before the Bolshevik scoundrels or who did not compromise with his conscience was compelled to hide like a criminal and to suffer from all sorts of privations and the forfeiture of ordinary civic rights. Cold, hunger, and the risk of losing his life were the continual threats which hung over the miserable existence of a human being in his struggle to live in Moscow, this vast and ancient capital of heretofore Great Russia.

It was no longer safe for anyone to walk in the streets at night, for there was always the risk of being stopped, robbed, and even stripped of one's clothing; or of being simply shot and thrown into some corner. Thus people sometimes just disappeared and none of their family ever knew what had happened to them. It was very difficult to buy anything in shops as everyone who had money to spend was looked

upon as a *bourgeois* and therefore a counter-revolutionary, a title which always involved one in some sort of harrowing trouble.

For days I searched about in my mind for something to do, as I could not remain without any occupation, for now the time had come when everyone had to earn money for his food and existence, as all accumulated wealth and capital had been swept away. I would never consent to accept employment with the Bolshevik Government because that would mean acting in direct contravention of my principles and helping them in their criminal destruction of the country.

In the house next door to my mother-in-law was a small but very cosy little apartment. It was an old-fashioned building with all the rooms of the ground floor vaulted in a manner that added very much to its general attractiveness. Still having a little cash in reserve, my wife and I decided that we could afford to rent these quarters. But, alas, we did not enjoy their comfort for long and the details of our departure were rather amusing and almost tragic.

In those days I had a tame monkey who was very much attached to me and would not recognise anyone else as master and who played an important part in my further life in Moscow. During my absence on the Orenburg journey he had been kept for me by the old coachman on my mother-in-law's estate and gave me a noisy welcome on my return.

One morning while my wife and I were having coffee, we heard the sound of voices and were suddenly faced by four sailors who came into the room

without knocking. They were accompanied by the vice-president of the House Committee. When I asked them what they wished, they answered that they wanted my flat and that we must vacate it at once as they intended to occupy it the following morning. Their chief said this in a voice which did not admit of any argument.

The cheek of the man's tone quite upset me and, keeping my temper as well as I could, I said:

"When I have finished my coffee I shall come out and speak to you. In the meantime you may go out in the yard and wait for me there!"

To our astonishment and gratification they at once withdrew and we began to discuss our situation created by this unexpected order from the holders of the destinies of Russia. We came to the conclusion that it was no use opposing the Bolshevik decisions because we well knew that this would be the surest way to get acquainted with the Cheka. When we had finished our breakfast I went out to these representatives of the Government and said:

"On what grounds, may I ask, do you allow yourselves to force me to vacate my apartment for you? I am occupying it under a legal contract and have paid my landlord the rent for several months in advance!"

"Your bourgeois contracts are nothing but scraps of paper for us, just as William II considered all treaties to be worthless scraps. Today the law in Russia is *WE!* And I shouldn't advise you to interfere with it and start an argument, *Tovaristch,* as you may have to answer for it. I am in possession of

a mandate from the *Tsik* (Central Executive Committee)."

"Might is on your side,—and so is lawlessness. I shall therefore take you through the apartment and hand it over to you on inventory as I do not by any means propose to be responsible to the landlord for the things which you will steal or destroy in the place!"

The vice-president of the House Committee kept on pulling me by the sleeve, at the same time whispering to me to be careful and use more polite language to the Bolsheviks; but I had already lost patience and had little thought of the consequences of my words. So we went to have a look around the apartment. In one of the small rooms my monkey was chained. When we entered this room I said to them:

"We ourselves can be out of the flat by tonight but I shall have to leave the monkey until tomorrow as I must find a place for him to live and I shall not have time to do this today."

"This is a question which can be easily settled," said one of the sailors as he drew his revolver and aimed at the monkey. I was so fond of the little creature that when this bigger brute threatened to kill it simply out of hand the blood rushed to my head and I forgot all prudence. I caught hold of the biggest wrench from a heap of my motor car tools which were lying on the floor beside us, raised it over the head of the sailor and threatened him through clenched teeth:

"If you pull your trigger, you rascal, I'll brain you that same instant!"

My wife and the vice-president held their breaths and waited for the end of that scene. Fortunately the sailor lowered his revolver. I stepped up to the monkey which jumped on my shoulder and, as though realising the danger, hid his head on my chest.

I stroked the animal and said to it in English:

"It's a bad man, John!"

The monkey knew these words as I always used to say them as a warning of danger. The sailor, seeing the monkey's fright, said to me:

"Don't worry, *Tovaristch,* I won't hurt him, I'm too fond of animals myself!" and he stretched out his hand to caress the little beast; but before I had time to breathe John sprang from my hands with a tremendous force that pulled out his chain at the collar and fastened his teeth in the sailor's hand. In a flash he bit the hand through to the bone then sprang from him as quick as lightning and disappeared around the door.

The four sailors bolted after it with drawn revolvers, intending to punish the fierce counter-revolutionist; but I was not in the least worried, for John knew how to hide and it was only my voice on those occasions that could bring him out from his place of refuge. The sailors looked for him for nearly half an hour, then gave it up and went away cursing the animal.

About one hour after they had gone I called my pet who all this time had been sitting in the top of

a tree in the garden. When he came down he was trembling from fright and cold. I had to take him inside, put him to bed and dose him with aspirin, hot tea and brandy which fixed him up all right so that in the morning he was quite well and cheerful. During the day we were fortunate enough to find two rooms with a very charming French family in the same house with my wife's mother and moved in that afternoon.

I now occupied myself with trying to find a way of making use of my car which I had left in Moscow before going to Orenburg. It was quite a good one, a 40 H.P. Berliet, and I decided to run it as an auto for public hire, but was faced with two very serious difficulties: first, the transfer of the car from the garage where it was stored to our house where the landlord had placed a shed at my disposal; and second, the question of a license for public driving.

When I decided to overcome the first difficulty at my own risk and went to the garage to fetch the car, luck was once more on my side. While on my way back in my car, an accident took place in a street I was following. A motor with some commissars in it was rounding a corner at reckless speed. Just after it had passed on, the car skidded up on to the sidewalk against a house and knocked a woman unconscious. A crowd of passers-by collected round her but nobody seemed to take any action to assist but only stood and gazed at her. I stopped, made my way through the crowd, carried the woman to my car and, having taken with me a Red guard as an eye-witness of what had happened, set out for the hos-

pital which was almost next door to our house and which was presided over by a doctor whom I knew. With an armed Red Soldier in the car I did not fear being stopped by anyone on the way. I delivered the injured woman to the hospital and slipped my car into the shed.

The next task was to obtain a license from the Bolshevik authorities and this was by no means a simple matter.

I thought first to try my luck with the Chauffeurs' Union. The risk in using this channel was perceptible as the average chauffeur was always considered a boisterous character even in pre-revolutionary days and, under the relaxed conditions of Bolshevism, had probably become a scoundrel. But remembering that I had previously been on good terms with this special Union and had more than once helped them out of various difficulties when I was still an officer, and being still a believer in the Russian saying that "a Russian always remembers a good deed," I took the risk and went to negotiate with them. They all knew that I was an officer and, I must say, received me with much more regard than I had dared to expect. When they asked me what was my present occupation, I told them that I now proposed driving my own car for public hire.

"That is why," I added, "I want to obtain a certificate of membership in your union, though I do not actually wish to exercise the privilege of a member, as I do not admit that anyone should interfere with my work any more than I intend to interfere in anything connected with the Union."

They quite saw what I meant and said:

"We shall give you a certificate at once and tomorrow we shall send you two men to register your car in our books and then you'll be all in order and need not fear anything. But in return you must promise to give us a hand in the event of the wind blowing from another direction!" concluded the speaker, looking at me significantly. I willingly promised to do my best for them, though I did not quite see how or when it might come. All I thought about at the moment was the securing of my license and did not care two straws about the possible or impossible atmospheric changes. Ten minutes later one of the men brought out my papers for which I thanked them and went home.

Then the next day came two men as promised to register the car. They looked it over and said:

"Very well, this will do for us and we shall take it straight away."

"What?" I ejaculated, "take it away? What do you mean?" and I instantly locked the door from the inside and picked up a huge hammer. "Now!" said I, swinging the hammer before their faces, "no joking with me, I know perfectly well how to deal with birds of your type; but as I am not in the mood today to fight, you had better tell me straight away how much you want for a proper license and go to the devil with your confounded registration." They looked at each other in silent consultation for a moment and then said:

"One thousand roubles each!"

"That's better," said I. "You will receive the

money as soon as you deliver me the license with all the stamps and signatures required."

They agreed and promised to bring me the wretched license the next day. On the following morning they appeared with the license and received the money, and, before going, said:

"*Tovaristch,* if you have difficulty in obtaining gasolene, which is very hard to get just now, you come to us at the Union and we shall always be glad to let you have as much as you require!"

That afternoon, as my wife and I went into her mother's apartment, we had the delightful surprise of finding my wife's faithful old maid just arrived and standing in the middle of the floor surrounded by a ring of all our much regretted travelling cases which we had been compelled to abandon in Orenburg with little hope of ever seeing them again.

After the first warm greetings were over we had time to observe and wonder at her extraordinary figure. Dressed in a long pelisse of my wife's, which was turned up at the bottom to absorb the great difference in height between them, and wearing an enormous hat, she appeared to have increased her latitude by twice its normal figure without in any way affecting her longitude, which was never very great. She gave the impression of a round ball standing in the midst of our seven cases. Raging with indignation, she was falteringly relating to the gathered household and servants how the Bolsheviks tried to take one case away from her on the plea that six were quite enough for one of her station. She

registered her determination to keep them all in such phrases as:

"I shall not let you devils have it. I should rather die on it than see you take it from me!"

My wife led her affectionately to our rooms while the servants and I brought along our recovered cases. Then we witnessed a performance more wonderful and more thrilling to us than that of any prestidigitator; for from under her hat, blouse and skirt and from out of her stockings there came an endless collection of all our gold and silver articles from the Orenburg house—cigarette cases, ash trays, picture frames and even vases. She saved the best trick for the last and completed her wonderful performance in my wife's room by removing from around her waist a belt into which she had sewn my wife's jewels and diamond necklaces. When she had thus handed over these last and most valuable possessions, she gave way and sank exhausted into a chair, asking that some tea be brought her.

When she had rested and revived a bit, we learned the remainder of the story. She was so distraught over the manner of her mistress's departure and over the thought of being separated from her after the twenty-five years that she had been with my wife's family, that she at once made up her mind to join us in Moscow and determined to bring all of our valuables with her, regarding our property with as much consideration as she would her own, if not more. Even after our marriage she used to scold my wife for tearing a frock or for getting her shoes wet. She collected those of our personal belongings

which she knew were most dear to us, packed them into our cases and carried them right with her, using them as a seat during the journey. During the seventeen days she was on the road she never once undressed, not even taking off her shoes or coat; for, if she had done so, there would have been a shower of our valuables. Moreover, she never so much as lay down during the journey, being afraid of bending or crushing some of the articles. On many occasions she had literally to fight to keep the *tovaristchi* from seizing the cases, for it was quite irregular for her to have so many worldly possessions. Thus struggling and enduring, this old servant brought through to us not only the many articles of clothing and the like which we now had no money to replace, but also the valuables and jewels which have literally kept us alive during these years of wandering. It is not permissible to draw aside entirely the curtain of the heart in such days and conditions as we are living through; yet I cannot refrain from paying to this simple peasant woman a tribute for devotion, courage, and endurance such as one seldom sees, nor from wondering how many other servants in other lands could today be found who would have carried her task through to the end. To complete the picture it is only necessary to add that she followed us out of Russia and insists on remaining with my wife for little or no pay until the time may come when we return again—as she believes we one day shall—to the previous conditions of life.

During the telling of her story she gave us what was best of all, the news that my mother and sisters

were safe and sound and that, although the Bolsheviks had worried them after my departure, this was now all past and everything was again peaceful in the house when she left.

All I had to do now was to secure gasolene for my car and find a way to earn money by running it. For the gasolene I turned to one of my friends asking him to sell me part of his supply, be it only one barrel.

"With great pleasure," said he. "All the gasolene I had is still safely hidden, but my two motor-cars have been seized by some fishy individuals. I went twice to the Soviet about it but the second time I was told that if I came to complain again, they would put me in prison. So I gave it up!"

I paid for one barrel and asked him to get it out of his cellar, so that I could come the next morning and fetch it with the car. In the morning he greeted me with the disappointing announcement:

"I shall return you the money you gave me, for the gasolene you bought yesterday has this morning been taken from me by force."

I did not accept the money but instead asked him to give me a description of the people who had taken the gasolene and of their motor car. From this description I realised that this was the work of two swindlers about whose love of easy profit during these days of lawlessness I had heard more than once before. Taking with me the son of our servant, I got in the car and went off to pay a visit to these gentlemen. On finding them at home, I adopted a bit of their own tactics and said to them:

"Today you took a barrel of gasolene from ——— without any right whatever to do so. For this I am in possession of a warrant to take you at once to the Cheka. Will you kindly step into my car?"

Both men showed considerable agitation and one of them asked:

"*Tovaristch*, can't we do anything to quash this matter?"

"You can possibly, if you return the gasolene at once; for then I shall ask the owner of the gasolene to withdraw the complaint, which he may do."

They were both evidently relieved and put the drum in the car. Then they wanted to say goodbye, but I insisted on at least one of them accompanying me to the victim of the theft. As soon as we had returned the stolen gasolene to its owner, the culprit bolted and I took my supply of the precious liquid home.

That same evening, after I had already gone to bed, I suddenly heard the noise of several motor cars under our windows. Looking out I noticed that there were three of them with about a dozen armed sailors and Red guards, which at once spelled to me a search and possibly my arrest. Little liking such a prospect, I hurriedly dressed and through a back window descended to the yard by a water pipe. With my chauffeur's coat on I mixed with the party, so that none took the slightest notice of me. I was terrified at the thought of a search in my apartment with its revolvers and various arms, besides certain incriminating personal records. If they should

seize these things, it would be fatal for me, as I could never acquit myself before their tribunals.

When they had looked through three or four apartments and approached mine, I stepped forward and said:

"Comrades, this is my apartment. My wife is sick and in bed, so could you please spare her the trouble of search," and with this I produced by certificate from the Chauffeurs' Union. They looked at it and said:

"We shall certainly not search your flat, *Tovaristch,* you need not worry," and went on without even looking into my rooms. Once more I was saved.

CHAPTER XIII

CHAUFFEUR TO THE KREMLIN

IN the morning I went out with my car and took a place on a regular motor car stand in one of the principal streets. After I had waited for about an hour, a man came up and began looking at the cars stationed there for hire. Apparently mine pleased him most, as he approached and said:

"I shall have to hire you for several hours for the President of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet of the People Commissars, Tovaristch Sverdloff."

I readily assented for I had long desired to be able to recognize personally these leading criminals.

We drove to the Kremlin where Sverdloff took his place in my car and kept me busy for over five hours. The front seat beside me was occupied by a sailor with a weird, brutish face and armed to the teeth. He kept on looking at me every now and then with a threatening expression in his eyes. Every time he did so I laughed so that finally, making his eyes so frightful and big that I thought they'd jump out of his head, he asked me:

"Why do you laugh at me?"

"Oh, if you only knew the arrangement of my car you would not attempt to frighten me with your

calf-like eyes. Do you see this button?" I continued, pointing to the Klaxon button. "Well, I may inform you, you old numb-skull, that if I press it the car will at once be blown into the air. I have fixed up an electric connection from the accumulator to the pyroxylin which I placed under your seat."

At one of the stops the sailor reported that yarn to Sverdloff who asked me why I had made such an arrangement in my car. I persuaded him that there was no such infernal machine and offered to allow him to inspect the car to assure himself.

"It was only a joke on my part," said I, "as I wanted to test the bravery of the famous 'Beauty and Glory of the Revolution'—the sailors!"

Though this closed the subject, the sailor refused to go further in my car and had to be replaced by another Red guard. If Sverdloff and his guard had been able to read my thoughts and the plans I had been making for the last three hours while the life of the President of this famous Committee was entirely in my hands, I should surely have been taken straight to the Cheka instead of being allowed to go quietly home. Several times I thought of developing full speed and jumping off the car, for then naturally nothing would be left of either the car or its passengers; but I decided it was not worth while to destroy Sverdloff alone when the chief organisers of the Bolshevik machinery were Lenin (Oulinanoff) and Trotzky (Leiba Bronstein) and I preferred awaiting my chance to bag this bigger game.

When we returned home that night, I spent hours thinking and planning what could be done. It be-

came evident to me that I could do nothing by myself and that I should have to find assistants somewhere. This was a most difficult problem as in these days one had to be very careful even with one's friends.

However, in a few days I succeeded in persuading two of my closest friends to participate in my plans. Both of them were formerly officers of the Imperial Guards, and registered full approval of my scheme. To be a success the plot would naturally have to be hidden by some other enterprise which could serve as a screen to the organisation, in order to avoid attracting the attention of the Bolsheviks. For that purpose I decided to open a public garage with motors to hire and with a repair shop as an annex. I also succeeded in obtaining money enough to purchase three more motor cars which we operated as taxis and were thus able to follow what was going on and to hear much that was said in supposed privacy.

After my trip with Sverdloff the Bolsheviks apparently approved of me and my car, for I was frequently summoned by telephone to take out one or the other members of the C.E.C.S.P.C. For these trips I either went in person or sent one of my trusted associates according to the particular circumstances.

One day there came the long-awaited opportunity in the announcement that within the next few evenings Lenin, Trotzky, Sverdloff, Kalinin, and Kameneff (alias Apfelbaum) would proceed to one of the suburban palaces to attend a conference, and that I should for that purpose keep my biggest motor

car ready every night from seven o'clock on. They wanted the biggest car as they preferred to go together in one vehicle. I was excited and inspired by this news as this might prove the occasion for putting my plans into execution. It meant that the fate of all the prominent leaders of Bolshevism would rest in my hands.

On my return home I summoned to my apartment my assistants, of whom I already had six, all of them ex-officers and proven men. We held our meeting in my garage. After chaining my monkey to the wall outside, as the best of sentinels against Red guards, I went back and locked the door from within.

I began by telling them all about the order I had received from the Bolshevik authorities and pointed out that this was an opportunity which could scarcely be expected to present itself to us again. Then I continued:

"For the night on which I am summoned to come to the Kremlin with our Berliet car to take the leaders of that gang of usurpers to a conference at a palace outside the town, I propose the following procedure. At about six miles from town there is a place on the road where a steep ravine is on the left and a grove of birches on the right. At about five o'clock you can all make your way out of the city in different groups and by different ways, meeting in this birch wood by from seven to half past. By about 7.30 or 8 o'clock I shall be approaching the spot and, before coming to the wood, shall handle the engine in such a way as to make it look as though there were engine trouble and shall stop the car to

get out and raise the hood to examine the carburetor. The minute I have the hood up, you must rush the car from all sides and dispose of the Red guard in the front seat and all the occupants with your revolvers. Then two or three of you must hold me while one gets into the car, starts the engine on first speed and, with the car under good headway, steer it for the edge of the ravine and jump just before it goes over. Then you can rope me, wrap me in the laprobe you will have taken from the car and tie this again on the outside and leave me there by the roadside to wait for the morning and some passerby to release me. It will also be best for you to leave a scrawling note pinned to the laprobe and reading:

" 'We have nothing against honest working people but have sworn vengeance on their oppressors.'

"As you will be masked I shall swear that I did not see your faces and I shall not hesitate to tell their examining tribunal that you jumped on the running board from both sides of the car, shot the Red guard and ordered me to stop on pain of death."

My plan was unanimously adopted and with this unusual feat to set it off we hoped to start a general rising against the Bolshevik régime.

One fine morning at about 9 o'clock I received a telephone message directing me to be at the Palace in the Kremlin by 6.45 that evening. I at once summoned all my associates and warned them that this day was the decisive one. We were all tremendously excited as everybody realised the seriousness and import of our proposed act and that on it might depend a re-shaping of the destinies of all Russia.

But the ways of Providence are inscrutable. All our plans were suddenly upset by a foolish, disorganised rising of the Social-Revolutionary Party together with the Anarchists who started fighting with the Bolsheviks in one of the streets of Moscow. About noon when we were quietly working in the garage we suddenly heard the sound of artillery firing followed by explosions of such force that it made the walls of our building tremble. We all climbed up the fire escape to the roof of a four story building next to ours, from where we saw that the two largest gun-powder magazines of Moscow were on fire.

The whole rising of the S.R. party was very stupid: for first of all they were not properly organised; secondly, they were too few and, thirdly, they had started the fight in the suburbs instead of giving a blow at the very heart, the Kremlin, where the Bolsheviks had their principal force. The rifle and artillery fire continued until about five o'clock and then stopped abruptly.

At six my car was ready and I went to the Kremlin crossing the Krasnaya Plostchat (the square before the Kremlin) only to find all the gates of the stronghold barred and a platoon of Red guards with two machine guns stationed at each of them. When I asked to be allowed to enter and was curtly rebuked, I requested the men on watch to report to whom it may concern that the motor car which had been ordered was waiting and that instructions should be given to let me pass. I was soon told that the conference had been postponed and that the car was not required, so I could do nothing but drive out

with the empty car to the rendez-vous and tell my associates that this time our plan had miscarried. Disappointed at the failure of our plot, we all returned to the garage and went home in very low spirits.

That night was a disturbed and horrible one for us as almost opposite to our house was the former Alexander Military Cadet School, now a Bolshevik prison, where we heard through the whole night rifle volleys followed by cries and moans. We understood that this was the result of that day's rising of the Social-Revolutionaries, the torturing of rebels among whom were many officers who had joined them in the struggle against Bolshevism and who had been captured during the day. No words can express what I felt in my heart; I covered my head with my pillow and sobbed like a child. The moral torment was unbearable, especially when I realised my helplessness. I only lay and thought: "My God, why haven't I my brigade of Orenburg Cossacks with me! With them I would stop this ghastly butchery and turn the tables on these criminals!"

Our torture was all the more poignant as we knew that many of our friends and perhaps even relatives must be among those being put to the wall in that building and that nothing could be done to save them.

That night was the beginning of a long period during which we heard daily rifles and revolvers inside the building. Terror had been once more proclaimed by the Bolshevik authorities, a "Red Terror" as they called it, which invariably followed

every disorder or activity of the people or of any party against the Bolshevist régime. It will never be possible to dull the impression made upon us by these few weeks of our life in Moscow. No writer, however strong his imagination, could produce anything comparable with the reality of those days.

All the executions of innocent people which I lived through as well as all I had seen and endured myself, engendered in me a deep feeling of vengeance which later on induced me to commit many acts which, without this background, I should have condemned if committed by others.

In order not to remain simply an inactive witness of these crimes, I worked out a plan of going south into the Ukraine to join a new organisation later known as the Volunteer or White Army; but I found it impracticable because my mother-in-law, who was a through and true Russian, would not move south, as that part of Russia was then occupied by the Germans whom she looked upon as Russia's enemies and my wife refused to leave her mother alone in Moscow. I had therefore no option but to remain and bear it.

CHAPTER XIV

MY FIRST VISIT TO THE CHEKA

A FEW days after the ill-fated rising of the Social-Revolutionary party I happened to be driving one of the leading Commissars in my car. As I was passing one of the former finest hotels in Moscow, now known as The First House of The Soviets, I was struck by a salutation of: "I wish you health, your honour!" which was the customary response of the soldiers in former days to the greetings of their officers. I looked around and in a chauffeur who was driving up to the Soviet House recognised one of my former soldiers, a driver from the Headquarters of the 9th Army where I was at the head of a Motor Transport Company.

If I had acknowledged the greeting, I might have been sent to Cheka; so I did not take any notice at the moment but, after taking my passenger to his destination, returned to search out the man who had spoken to me.

When I had left my car to one side and was walking among the others standing near the hotel trying to find that of my soldier, I suddenly heard again the same salutation followed by:

"Are you looking for me, Your Honour?"

"Yes, d——, I'm looking for you!" I said, seeing

the man. "Are you off your head to address me in such a fashion among these people?"

"Forgive me, *Tovaristch*," he answered in confusion, "but I was thrown completely off my guard at the pleasure of seeing one of our old crowd!"

We went aside and I began asking him where he was living and what he was doing.

"By the way," I went on, "how do you like the new 'freedom'?"

In answer he only waved his hand and used bad language about the Bolsheviks. From him I learned that more of my former subordinates were then serving as chauffeurs with some of the Bolshevik leaders in the Kremlin.

"They are compelled by circumstances to do it," he explained, "to avoid dying from starvation. Everyone who serves the present rulers receives good rations and is well paid. We often think and speak of the good old times when we were with you in the Carpathians and regret those days very much indeed. And what is your occupation? You do not mean to say that you are yourself serving the Bolsheviks?"

"Certainly not," I retorted, "I have started an independent garage and am running cars for public hire."

He then asked the address of my garage, which I gladly gave him and he added that, if I had no objection, he would bring the other fellows for a visit to me. I said that I should be delighted to see old friends who had been true and faithful to me,

and who like all the rest of us had been engulfed in the tidal wave of Bolshevism.

In the yard of my garage I had as a watchman my little monkey John who seemed to have the gift of distinguishing a Red guard or an agent of the Bolshevik police from anyone else. Every time any such person appeared John used to start a terrible row, jumping about and whistling. This was very useful for us as it always gave us the time to conceal everything which was not intended for the eyes of a Bolshevik.

One day the son of our charwoman was teasing John with a stick while I was busy in the garage. John was very patient for a long time but finally lost his temper and sprang at the twelve year old mischiefmaker breaking his chain. Though the scared young ruffian ran for his life the sprightly monkey overtook him in a second and buried his teeth in the boy's leg. On hearing the shrieks of the victim I came out of the garage and grabbed the monkey by his neck and unclutched his jaws. Then I said to the boy:

"You can only blame yourself for it. How many times have I cautioned you not to tease John? You were just asking for trouble and you got it!"

With the incident thus closed as I supposed, I chained John up and returned to my work.

A few minutes later my war mates arrived convoyed by the one whom I had met the other day. The meeting was a delightfully cordial one, during which we recalled many of our experiences at the front. The men told me that, if at any time I had

any difficulty in obtaining gasolene or tires, just to telephone them and they would provide me with everything I might require.

They were much interested in John and I told them about the incident which had just happened with the boy. It was only a moment later that John set up one of his noisy rows, which put me plainly on notice that some Red guards had entered the yard.

When I went out to speak with them, they showed me a warrant for my arrest and announced they were ordered to bring me to the Commissariat under escort.

"What for?" was my question. They said it was because of the row that had just occurred between John and the little boy, and that I was charged with having set the monkey on the charwoman's son and with having beaten him. My garage assistants who had witnessed the whole affair said that they would come with me and give evidence as to what had really happened. The chauffeurs also insisted on going along and promised to stick up for me, so our party counted eleven in all.

The commissar of the police station read me the following charge:

"*Tovaristch,* you are accused of instigating monkeys to attack people and also of beating a child!"

"Who told you that?" I asked him.

"The boy's father who is here in this room."

The men who came with me began to protest vigorously, while I said to the commissar:

"I neither beat the boy nor set the monkey on him. As regards the boy's father, I can if you wish now give him in your presence a good whacking blow to teach him not to tell lies about me in the future."

The commissar shifted in his chair apparently uncomfortable before my legal supporters, whose attitude was so conspicuously unfriendly.

"Don't get excited," he counselled, "I don't insist on your guilt in the matter, especially in view of the numerous witnesses you have to contradict the evidence of the boy's father. I release you and you must try to settle the matter amicably between the two of you."

This closed legal proceedings and I left the court amused and chagrined at the way in which justice was now manipulated instead of being administered in my sorely distressed native land. And I was grateful too for both the timely arrival of my fellow chauffeurs and for the fact that the bonds of friendship between my former soldiers and their now discredited officer had withstood the vitiating acids of Bolshevism and had been the means of saving me from possible injustice and all it could mean under the new freedom.

CHAPTER XV

MIRACLES AND SEARCHES

ON the first of May the Bolsheviks organised a great demonstration on the Krasnaya Plostchad near the Eastern wall of the Kremlin.

From this square there are two entrances to the Kremlin through two large gateways in the form of triumphal arches. One of these is called the Nikolsky Gate from the fact that in the arch is an ikon of St. Nicholas which is believed to possess miraculous powers. This ikon was revered and worshipped by all the Orthodox church for several hundreds of years. Now the Bolsheviks, who refuse to attribute anything miraculous to ikons in general and do not recognize any saints, covered this ikon and the arch with a large red cloth so as to hide it from the public and also to show their contempt for this emblem of sanctity so revered by the people. On that red cover was an inscription: "The first May 1st of the Revolution."

This of course created intense feeling against the Bolsheviks among the religious element of the Moscow people, who looked upon it as a blasphemous act against a sacred ikon. To check and repress this feeling of irritation the Bolshevik authorities decided if necessary to use armed force on the 1st of

May when they most feared an outburst of this public emotion.

On this day, several thousands of people gathered in the square before the covered ikon growing excited and irritated at the sight of it, the authorities were about to use their force against the people. But before they had time to act thousands of voices were heard from the ever increasing crowd, saying:

"Look, look at the ikon!"

All eyes were turned towards the arch. The red curtain split in two exactly in front of the ikon which appeared in the opening in all its radiant beauty before the eyes of the crowd, motionless and petrified in religious ecstasy.

The great multitude and even the soldiers of the Red guard bared their heads and knelt before the miraculous ikon, all save the commissars kneeling and remaining long in prayer. As most of the commissars were Jews, the irritation of the crowd finally ran so high that the people around them began to pull the hats and caps from the commissars' heads and buffet them.

The news of this wonderful episode of the ikon ran over Moscow in no time and everyone who heard of it hurried to the Krasnaya Plostchad to see the miracle with his own eyes. The influx of people from all parts of the city was increasing momentarily until finally the crowd packed every foot of the square. The Bolsheviks finally became so nervous at the sight of the crowd that they opened fire but without any effect upon the people whose religious ecstasy held them in the square.

Finally the Bolsheviks, seeing that their repressive measures had no effect and that the moral force of the crowd was mastering them, began to draw their troops into the Kremlin through the second gate.

Of what happened immediately after this, I had the following account given me by an eye witness in the square:

"As we were approaching the square we did not see how we could progress further because the crowd was very dense and ahead of us were the Bolshevik troops who were continually firing. Then suddenly we were caught up by a wave of people which pressed from behind and we heard voices shouting:

" 'The Bolsheviks are withdrawing inside the walls of the Kremlin!'

"That wave of humanity carried us right in front of the arch and the ikon. The rifle shots continued but no one seemed to notice them, so strong was the impression created by the sudden appearance of the image of St. Nicholas from behind the red cloth which had covered it. As I looked at it, I noticed that the rent was growing larger and larger just around the ikon; but more impressive than all was the fact that from below, the curtain was gradually disintegrating into fragments and giving the air a carmine tint as they fell to the ground. Everyone in the crowd fought to get a piece of that red covering to keep as a memento of the miracle and I myself brought a small piece of it home. After we had watched the sight for some moments, all the people in the square suddenly as by command fell to their knees and joined in chanting prayers to the Holy

Saint in one tremendous choir. Never in my life have I witnessed so impressive a scene as this great kneeling, praying crowd of suffering humanity."

On the following day the Patriarch Tikhon organised a religious procession with crosses and holy banners from all the churches in Moscow, which took on the appearance of a great pilgrimage to the holy ikon of St. Nicholas. The crowd was so impressive and inspiring that the Bolsheviks locked themselves up inside the Kremlin walls and left the square and all of its approaches to the worshipping people.

Several days later I received a visit from an unknown man who called me aside and said:

"Colonel G——, the former Commander of the Moscow garrison under the Provisional Government, is very anxious to see you and wants to know whether you can meet him in the apartment of F—— tomorrow night about 8 o'clock?"

I said that I would come.

The next evening I went to the place of meeting accompanied by two of my officer assistants, though I knew no good could come of that interview, as the Colonel was a Social-Revolutionary. The door was opened by G—— himself who had something mysterious about him. He took us into the dining room where several people were already occupying places around the table.

"Everyone here is vouched for, so that you may speak freely."

After I gave the same assurance for my friends, he opened the conversation thus:

"The point is this. I have heard that you are running a motor car business with a group of experienced officers as your assistants and this is what I propose offering you. We intend to overthrow the Bolshevist rule. You can help us a great deal with your motor cars."

"Whom do you mean by 'we' and who will be at the head of the movement?" I inquired.

"WE are the organisation of the Social Revolutionary party and it is I personally who will be at the head of the movement," the colonel explained.

After a few moment's reflection I answered:

"I am quite willing to assist you in overthrowing the Bolshevik Government but I do not mind warning you that as soon as this is done I shall try to hang the whole lot of you on the nearest lamp posts as I consider the Social Revolutionaries about as harmful to Russia as the Bolsheviks themselves."

"Are you joking?" was his puzzled question.

"Not in the least," I answered calmly, "and I repeat that it is only under these conditions which I have just now expressed that I am willing to help you."

"Then there is nothing more to be said between us on this subject," he ejaculated, looking very perplexed and disappointed.

"Apparently not," said I, and with this we parted.

As I anticipated, nothing came of it and there was no sign of a Social-Revolutionary rising. The whole plot only developed in a ridiculous demonstration in one of the outlying quarters of the town where it was promptly quashed by the Bolsheviks.

One day as I was passing the church of the Saviour on my way home from the garage, I noticed that all the people in the streets seemed to be panic-stricken and were running with fright in all directions. At first I could not make out the cause but caught the explanation a few seconds later.

I noticed numerous Bolshevik patrols coming down all the adjoining streets carrying their rifles ready for action. As they emerged on the Place they quickly joined up and threw a complete circle around the corralled crowd and, gradually tightening the ring, drew the people into the church in the centre of the Square. It all happened so swiftly and unexpectedly that very few of the people had time to get out of the ring. The total number thus caught was from three to four hundred, of whom I counted as a very important one in my way of reckoning.

Watching the development of this sudden move I saw that the patrols were inspecting passports and documents. Most of the people after the examination of their documents were placed on one side with the comment of a commissar:

"For the Cheka."

It happened that I had left my documents at home and had therefore no papers to produce, which of course meant that I should have to join the party for the Cheka.

Far from pleased with such a prospect, I edged up to one of the Red guards, a Lett, and addressed him in Lettish at the same time trying to adopt their way of speaking:

"Why should I waste my time here when I ought

to be at the garage to take my car to the Alimentary Committee of the S.N.D.?"

As I was close to the edge of the crowd and far away from the Commissar, the Red guard, believing that I was one of their kind, said:

"Then be off quickly!" And it did not take me long to go.

Thus, thanks to a slight acquaintance with the Lettish language, I once more escaped the net of the Cheka.

At a safe distance from the church I stopped again and looked round to see what would be the end of the story. Shortly afterwards a group of about two hundred were marched off under a strong escort in the direction of the Cheka. I heard the hysterical cries of the arrested men, women and children. Many of those unfortunate ones disappeared forever and were never heard of again. No one will ever record the mass of suffering that this diabolic institution has imposed upon the Russian people.

This incident clearly demonstrated to me that it was essential for me to obtain a civil passport since the only documents I had were old officers' certificates and the papers of my peasant servant which were no longer appropriate in view of my occupation.

I found a commission-agent whom I had known for some time and bargained with him to secure me a blank passport sheet with only the Soviet Stamp and the signature of the Commissar of the Passport Department. For this job I gave him 250 roubles, and in three days was in possession of the magic

paper which I filled in myself in such a way that I could live freely in Moscow and be exempt from the various registrations and inspection of passports.

One day my wife's mother asked me whether I would undertake to drive a sick friend in my car to a sanitarium about twenty-five miles from Moscow.

This was a rather difficult task as one had to secure a special permit each time one left or entered the city. As these permits were rarely issued to private individuals, I decided, before answering my mother definitely, to see how strict the Bolshevik outposts at the barrier were and what were the chances of getting through the line of the patrols without such a paper.

I found that with a bit of luck this was possible and I made up my mind to risk it, since it was out of the question to think of taking a sick person by rail in the dirty trains packed with Red guards and bag-carriers.

So the day was fixed and, at an hour I thought most propitious, I started out with one of my assistant chauffeurs beside me. On approaching the outpost I brought the car down to its minimum speed and, though two Red guards waved to me, I did not stop but passing them slowly, said:

"Everything is in order. I am carrying a sick old woman and will be back in two hours!" They let me pass and beyond this barrier there was no further Red danger.

After we had safely left the patient at the sanitarium and were again approaching the outpost, we saw through the gathering darkness two figures

in the middle of the road carrying lanterns which they waved at my approach. Having made up my mind not to stop, as the outposts were much more strict at night than in the daytime, I stepped on the accelerator and put out my back light so that the sentries could not see my number and all this time kept pushing the needle up and sounding the Klaxon wildly. At the last moment the sentries sprang aside and I shouted:

"Urgently to the Loubianka!"

Everybody understood what that meant as the Cheka was situated in the street of that name. I never knew whether the sentries heard me or not though on my part I distinctly heard rifle shots fired at us from behind and the crash of the smashed wind shield of the car. However, just at that moment we swung quickly into a side street and then turned several more corners to hide our trail and arrived safely back in the garage.

After a month of comparative quiet the Bolsheviks for some unknown reason started searching all the houses in our street. Moreover, as I began to notice about the same time that the Police of our district were carefully and closely watching me, I showed myself as little as possible and in going in and out of the house I usually chose all sorts of back ways and back streets. Also I thought it good policy to visit frequently the squad of the Bolshevik Armoured Car Company who were occupying in the adjoining building the apartment from which we had been ejected by the sailors. Whenever I went there, I always tried to make them believe that I was of

their kind by adopting their manners and their method of speech, often using for that purpose the bad language which was one of the distinguishing marks of their class of people. Finally they lost all feeling of suspicion toward me and even began trusting me to a certain extent. Once or twice the fortunate opportunity came for me to help them in repairing their cars, as they themselves had really had little or no experience in handling motors. One night when several motor cars pulled up in front of our door for the obvious purpose of a search, I immediately slipped out of the back door and through the back yards reached the quarters of the Armoured Car Division, where I remained about two hours playing cards with the men. When the search of the apartment was over my wife sent for me and I quietly returned home.

A few days later an acquaintance of mine warned me that while he was at the Cheka on some business of his he accidentally overheard a conversation between the commissars regarding a minute search that was being planned for our quarters, during which my name was frequently mentioned. I thanked him for the warning and at once made plans for an escape in case of a visit from those undesirable callers. In the night I slept in my clothes for fear of being taken unawares.

Only a few nights later we heard the approach of motor cars and saw them stop right in front of our house. Through our window, which was just over the entrance, I heard instructions being given by the head of the party:

"Cover all exits from the house. He must be captured this time!"

I was not dead sure that the "he" referred to myself but I had no stomach for taking the risk and so decided to put my plan of escape into execution. I went up to the fourth story and rang the bell of my mother-in-law's apartment. Exactly opposite and somewhat below the kitchen window in her apartment at a distance of about twelve feet was the roof of the next house, from which a fire escape led down into the yard of the Armoured Car Division.

The jump was a difficult one but not impossible, especially for a man who knew that a party of Bolsheviks was after him to take him to the Cheka; so overcoming with effort a natural feeling of fear, I jumped . . . and landed safely on the opposite roof, though I had a moment of terror when I felt that while my left foot was firmly on the roof, the right one remained in the air. But owing to my momentum I landed flat on the roof on my face and remained lying there for a few seconds to recover from the sensation of giddiness which my aerial journey from a fourth story window and my fright had caused.

With my head a bit steady I crawled along the roof to the fire escape and descended to the yard of the automobile division where I felt quite safe and could collect my thoughts to plan the next move.

Not to be caught standing in the middle of the yard looking like an idiot, I jumped into one of the armoured cars. Naturally I did not want to go into the quarters of the men, for to rouse them at such

an hour would of course raise their suspicions. Then the Bolsheviks themselves came to my rescue. In the yard I heard the voices of the approaching party of searchers which had been through my apartment. Never liking to sit and wait for impending danger, but always preferring if possible to secure a vantage by going to meet it, I crawled out of the car and, stretching myself as though just aroused from sleep, I asked in a loud voice:

"What's all the row about? Has anything happened?"

Two of them came up to me and explained:

"Do not trouble, *Tovaristch,* nothing unusual has happened. We only wanted to collar a fellow living in the main building, but had no luck and didn't find him. Now we want to search this other building because we have heard there is a clandestine wine cellar in it and wish to have a look."

"In this I'm with you!" I said. "Maybe a bit of wine will fall to me as well!" and I followed them into the house to join the search.

In this house there lived an old friend, a general, who had, as I well knew, plastered up the door of one of the farthest sections of his cellar in which he had stored all his oldest and best wines.

All through the search I was hoping that they would not find the concealed wine. But they inspected the walls so very minutely that they discovered the section on which the plaster looked fresher than elsewhere. Somebody produced iron bars and in less than fifteen minutes they made a hole in the wall through which they entered this

cache. Flushed with their find, they started testing the various brands and the test soon became a regular bout which lasted over two hours. When it was over, they presented me with four bottles and carried the rest away in baskets to the motor cars. Then they all shook hands with me and rolled away, grieved that they had not got their clutches on the primary object of their search, but consoled by the cordiality of their secondary object. I watched them away down the street before going up to apologize to my wife for staying out at a drinking bout at such a serious and trying time for her.

The next day I took the four bottles of Madeira to the poor old general who had been robbed of his choicest wines during the night and explained to him my forced participation in the burglary.

After this open attempt to net me, I had to sleep out in different quarters every night, being now unpleasantly certain that I was seriously looked for. As the only ground on which the Bolsheviks could want me was the fact that I was an officer, I realised that I had been reported by somebody and I suspected the chairman of our House Committee, a Jew by the name of Yankel Slavin. In view of this fact I was thoroughly astonished when I was asked one night to attend a meeting of this committee to which I found on arrival they had elected me a member. Suspicious of this unexpected honour and thinking that there was something fishy about it, I thanked them for the favour but said:

"As long as such a person as this Slavin is at the

head of the Committee, I decline to participate in its activities."

This objection of mine naturally did not please Slavin and the look which he gave me as I was leaving the room had nothing comforting in it for me.

Some nights I felt shaky about putting my car in the garage and simply left it under a shed in the yard of the car division. One morning when I was thus in their court and was lying on my back under the car repairing something, there rolled into the yard a very smart and big automobile carrying sub-Lieutenant Krylenko, Commander-in-Chief of all the Armed Forces of Soviet Russia. He got out and entered the quarters of the Armoured Car Division. I continued my work and was at the same time talking with two of the Red Guard. In a few minutes Krylenko came out again and resumed his place in his automobile, which however would not start. They all had a hand at trying to find the difficulty but the engine refused to go for any of them.

After a long search they discovered the trouble: the Commander-in-Chief's car had no gasolene! Finally, Krylenko got out again and came over to me, saying:

"*Tovaristch,* can you lend me half a pood of gasolene as I must go on at once to Headquarters?"

Although I knew who was speaking to me, I remained under my car and asked him:

"And who are you?"

"I am the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian

Soviet Armies, Lieutenant Krylenko!" he responded with an imperious note in his voice.

"Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army?" I ejaculated, getting out from under my car with a hammer in my hand and pretending I was in fury. "Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army?" I repeated questioningly, "Lieutenant Krylenko, who can enjoy all the imaginable comforts of life! And you dare to come to poor people who are sweating for their living and beg for a pood of gasolene? May you be cursed, you dirty dog! Get out of here at once before I let you feel the weight of this hammer on your swelled head," I thundered at him at the top of my voice. Krylenko didn't expect such a reception from a labourer and faltered in a half-humiliated tone:

"Do not speak so loud, *Tovaristch,* some one might hear us, for I really am the Commander-in-Chief!"

"I don't care a —— what you are, and don't wish to have another word with you. Clear out!" and I crawled under my car again.

Krylenko stood a few minutes aghast and silent and then returned to his car and dispatched his chauffeur to find gasolene somewhere else. When he finally left, the Red guards who witnessed the tilt came over and chuckled:

"Well, you did give it to him this time!" and for quite a while afterwards they kept walking round me and repeating to themselves:

"That's all to the good, it served him right!" After this incident my reputation grew perceptibly

with them and they showed a distinctly increased esteem for me.

There was living in Moscow at this time one of my relatives, a gentleman of about fifty-five years of age who was of an extremely panicky temperament. One night he asked me whether I would be willing to drive him and his wife, my aunt, to the railway station as there was no chance of getting an *izvostchik* in those days. Of course I agreed and brought the car round to their house at 11 p.m. to catch an 11.50 train.

On approaching the station I noticed a Bolshevik patrol commanded by a Jew commissar posted at the entrance. Fearing trouble, I thought that the best way to circumvent them would be to take the offensive; so instead of stopping where all the vehicles did to discharge their passengers, I rolled right up to the entrance on the ramp. As my passengers were getting out, the commissar ran up and started using bad language. I answered him quietly but curtly:

"What authority have you over me, you filthy toad? If you are a commissar, you must give an example of politeness to your subordinates!" As this had no effect upon him and he continued to use obscene words, I said as I started to park the car:

"Wait a second, you devil! Now it is I that will talk to you!"

Having placed the car properly in a parking space, I pulled out a large wrench from under the seat and returned to the station. On nearing the patrol I noticed that the commissar was no longer with them and inquired where he was.

"Oh, Comrade," was the answer, "when he saw you taking something from under the seat he ran for his life into the yard and we are afraid he cannot be found, even with a lantern! If you had started beating him we should not have stood up for him, as we would not turn against a fellow-worker to defend a Jew. And he knew that perfectly well."

"Well, it's just his luck to have got away in time!" said I, sitting down on the step beside the patrol and lighting a cigarette.

With the men thus on my side I soon got up and went to see whether my old people were all right. Apparently they had already gone to take seats in the train as they were not to be seen inside the station. Two Red guards at the door of the platform were inspecting papers and holding up the crowd. As it was too long a process working up to them, I decided to get out through the window and, while doing so, I heard some one saying behind me:

"There you are! Everything is permitted to a *Tovaristch* and nothing to the general public!"

I at last found my people, and saw the old lady safely off before turning back to the car; but on our way through the station we suddenly found ourselves caught in a trap with all the doors occupied by Red patrols. Fortunately for me the door through which we sought to pass was held by the patrol with whom I had spoken after my row with the commissar. I told my uncle to follow me and went quickly towards the entrance. When the Bolsheviks said that no one was to be let out, I inquired in astonishment:

"Do you not recognize me? My motor car is standing outside!"

Then the soldiers, remembering me, let me through. The old gentleman was pale and trembling from fright. I got through all right but he lost his head from nervousness and remained behind as the crowd started to follow me and charged the door but was stopped by the bayonets of the patrol. Seeing this, I approached the leader of the soldiers and whispered to him:

"Look here, *Tovaristch,* don't you recognise that old man?"

"No," said he, "who is he?"

"He is the Vice-President of the Pan-Russian Cheka and by midnight we must be at the Loubianka for an investigation. If you don't believe it, go and look at the car, which carries a certificate that it comes from the Loubianka."

Of course he did not go to verify my statement and let my uncle through at once. At last we reached the car and made for home. As bad luck would have it, the acetylene supply became exhausted and my head lights went out. We were stopped by a patrol and threatened with arrest for driving without lights. In answer to all their threats I only said:

"What fools you are, not to recognize one of your lot. Why don't you arrest Lenin and Trotzky while you are about it?"

"What do you mean?" they asked bewildered.

"Why it is a member of the Cheka whom I am taking on an urgent mission for the investigation and the arrest of a prominent criminal."

They apologised and left us to continue homeward. We were safe out of it all, but the next day my poor old relative was laid up in bed with fever and headache caused by the strain of his journey to the station.

CHAPTER XVI

A FORTNIGHT IN THE COUNTRY

LIFE in Moscow was becoming more and more dangerous for me and it was impossible to work quietly without continuous interference. In view of this my wife and I decided to go down to her mother's estate, Ouzkoe, for a fortnight and thus not only have a rest but also give the Bolsheviks an opportunity to forget my existence for a while.

In order to avoid attracting attention we went off on foot and walked for about two hours before we entered the cool rooms of the house and dropped down with delight into the comfortable big armchairs for a rest. The old housekeeper was delighted to see us and immediately set about serving us some eggs and a big pitcher of delicious cold milk. It was unimaginably pleasant to realise that we had at last for a short time come out of that chaotic hell called Moscow and that now we were to have the opportunity of enjoying a few days in a country house set in the quiet of a lovely park.

Towards evening a party of peasants came to welcome my wife just as soon as they had news of her arrival, for all my wife's family were much esteemed by the country people. We chatted with them for a long time and listened to their repeated complaints

of all they had to suffer at the hands of the Bolsheviks. They expressed unfeigned delight at seeing my wife and hoped that her mother would also come and live in the country.

"Without you," they said, "we feel like children without their parents!"

Just a little later some other women arrived bringing with them chickens, eggs, jam, honey, and quite a quantity of fine white bread such as we had not seen for several months.

Generally speaking the chief means of existence of these suburban peasants was the culture of strawberries which they took to Moscow for sale in the city market.

"We used to earn plenty of money with our strawberries; whereas now, if we take them to Moscow, the Bolshevik patrols at the approaches of the town always take away several baskets for themselves without thinking of paying for them, and destroy every berry that remains, sending us home with empty carts and purses. In case we complain or protest, they threaten us with their awful rifles; so that the whole year's work is quite lost and we remain without our only source of income. If this goes on for very much longer we shall be reduced to starvation!"

I can certify that wherever and whenever I had an opportunity to speak with the peasants this was the universal complaint against the Bolshevik interference with their life and against their robbing of them under one pretext or another. They all invariably regretted the past and wished it might return.

In spite of our great pleasure at being in the country, we had at times, especially in the evening, a sort of nervous, restless feeling that we were all alone in a huge country house with only the company of my wife's old maid, for the nonce, housekeeper, and the former butler's eighteen-year-old son who was quite deaf in his right ear and took advantage of this to sleep on his left side and thus protect himself from all disturbance. As we could never be sure that the house would not be suddenly raided by one of the many bands of highway robbers that were terrorizing the countryside, we kept the coachman on patrol duty with a rifle throughout the whole night.

After a week of what turned out to be almost heavenly repose when compared to the nerve-wracking experiences of the previous months, we received a message saying that my wife's mother was indisposed and wished my wife to return to her. This she did, but prevailed upon me to remain a few days longer in the country until she should find out whether the Bolsheviks had relaxed their search for me and whether it was safe for me to return to Moscow. It took a week before the message came saying that it was safe to go back.

As the house contained many precious pictures and family portraits, I decided on my own responsibility to take them to Moscow and conceal them in a safe place in order to save them from possible destruction in the event the Bolsheviks should sequester the house and the estate, a thing that might happen at any moment.

It was naturally impossible to carry them in their

heavy frames, so I had to take them out and make them into a roll that would not attract the Bolshevik guards. Besides this roll, I had many other packages, such as a few pounds of white flour, various gold and silver things, and, last but not least, my little John whose cage was fastened on the step of the carriage.

Just outside a large village about two miles from Moscow we were stopped by a group of peasants who said to us:

"If you are carrying anything of any value or anything edible, you might better turn back; for in an old dilapidated brick works down there at the turn of the road there is a gang of Bolsheviks who stop all who pass, search them and confiscate their property. Take our word for it; you will not be able to reach Moscow safely. We have just been through it and here we are, robbed of everything we had."

My campanion, the maid, became very much frightened and tried to persuade me to abandon the carriage and continue our journey by a roundabout road, saying:

"Remember that you are an officer and you will surely be killed!" But I refused the counsel and decided to bull it through as usual.

As we were driving up to the supposedly dangerous point in the road we did not notice anyone at first and thought we were going to get off scot free, when suddenly from a ditch beside the road two armed men sprang up, one of whom caught the horse by the bridle while the other came up to the side of

the carriage where John was tied and asked me in a savage voice:

"What have you got in all these packages?" and punctuated the question with the muzzle of a revolver.

"We are taking our personal belongings from the country to Moscow."

"And who are you?" he continued.

I replied that we were servants of the owners of an estate near Moscow which our masters had abandoned, and, considering ourselves free, we were now going to live in Moscow and were carrying in our baggage property which our masters had left behind and which we had decided to make use of. But the bandits preferred to verify what I had said and have a look at our luggage.

The unfortunate maid was sitting with chattering teeth and half dead from fright. Knowing, as I related above, that John had an uncanny ability for picking out Red soldiers and for discomfiting them, I withdrew the cover which was over the things at our feet and the monkey cage and said:

"Please have a look at them if you wish."

The *Tovaristch* was standing quite close to the cage when John suddenly stretched out his hand through the wire bars and grabbed the man's coat, making frightful grimaces and whistling madly as he drew the coat into his cage. The *Tovaristch* started with an expression of terror on his face, dropped the rifle out of his hand and jumped to the other side of the ditch, crying:

"Good Lord! what in Heaven is that?"

"The devil!" I said quietly.

"Then you may go to hell with your things!" he shouted to us, which we proceeded to do, as we went on into Moscow.

The old maid who had hated little John up to that day was so fascinated by his performance that she immediately turned his admirer and brought him sweets every morning.

CHAPTER XVII

OFFICERS, EXPLOSIONS AND ARMS

IN Moscow I found a Soviet decree had been promulgated to the effect that all officers should report for registration to a special Bolshevik Commission located in one of the military schools. This decree guaranteed a complete inviolability of the person of every officer who would voluntarily report. "Those failing to do so," the decree stated, "if and when found, will be considered without the law and will be shot at once without trial."

I didn't doubt for a moment that this was a trap set for the officers by the Bolshevik authorities and therefore not only decided not to register myself but tried to dissuade everyone I could from taking such a step. Many officers were, however, afraid to disregard this order of the Bolsheviks and reported themselves. The result was that all those who registered (their number mounted to just over a thousand) were herded into a riding school and there locked up.

Naturally this caused great panic and nervousness among their relatives, who went to the school to find out what was happening, only to be refused admittance at the gates and attacked by a company of Chinese employed by the Cheka, who shamelessly and

furiously whipped them with *nagaikas* or Cossack whips.

The families tried to take the prisoners some extra food. Some of these succeeded in having the parcels accepted by paying large sums of money to the sentries; but even then, although the Red soldier took the money, the parcels never reached their destination.

Thus ten days or more went by. A new and terrifying report spread through the town that the Bolsheviks were intending to gas the officers in the riding school, to do away with all the prisoners at one time. Whether this rumor was true or not, no one could say, but it spurred on the officers who were still at liberty in their plans to save their pals from such an awful death.

We were formulating many schemes but had not yet time to execute any of them when we heard one day the detonation of a tremendous explosion. It appears that one group of energetic officers had set fire to the Moscow gas-works, whose tanks exploded with a terrific force that frightened all the inhabitants of the city. The following day the gun powder works also went into the air. These timely measures made the Bolsheviks realise that some one was making reprisals for the arrest of the officers and induced them to release the victims of their dastardly proclamation.

As is well known, the Bolsheviks had already signed the peace with Germany at Brest-Litovsk, and the Germans had sent to Moscow their new ambassador, Count Mirbach.

The street in which the German Ambassador's house was situated was declared "out of bounds" for the general public except for those who were actually living there and even those had to have special written permits to be able to leave their houses and return to them. German sentries were placed at the gates of the house.

Inasmuch as the Russian officers of the Imperial Army did not recognise the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty, the presence of a German Ambassador in Moscow deeply hurt their national pride and roused their indignation. All of us tried to scheme out some way of getting rid of Mirbach and finally two officers volunteered to start a bit of trouble for him. This is how they did it.

Nobody knew how or with what permits, but one day at about noon two men entered the Count Mirbach's house. They went straight to the garage and opened the doors with a key. Inside was the new car which Mirbach had just bought for 200,000 roubles.

The men seemed to be quite familiar with it, filled the tank with gasolene, drove the car into the yard, locked the doors again, sounded the horn for the sentries to open the gates and quietly drove off. In spite of the fury of Mirbach and of the Bolshevik authorities nobody ever knew who those two men were or could find out what became of them. Although everything possible was done to trace them and the car, they entirely disappeared and were never seen nor heard of again. The anti-Bolshevik population of Moscow was delighted and made

much fun of the Germans. My garage was situated in a house next to a Bolshevik police station so that the policemen and Red guards were continually spying on us to overhear what we were saying and find out what we were doing, frequently visiting us in a casual manner, as though they had just come over for a chat. We could see, however, that they were intently watching us and listening to every word we said. They had probably received instructions to keep an eye on every garage and on everybody who had anything to do with motor cars. I made up my mind to rid myself of their eavesdropping by winning them over in a personal way.

Through my numerous acquaintances among the Kremlin chauffeurs, I succeeded in obtaining a few bottles of pure spirit which I diluted with water to a drinkable strength, and, putting luscious cherries into it, manufactured a colored vodka dear to the Russian heart. One day I walked into the police station and whispered to two or three policemen who were off duty an invitation to my garage. When they came over, I closed the doors and, without saying a word, offered each of them a large glass of my brew which they drank with unmistakable delight and enthusiasm. On parting, they warmly shook my hand and said:

"Many thanks, *Tovaristch*! It is a very long time since we have tasted vodka like that. We want you to remember that whenever you want anything, you must let us know and you can count on us to help you."

Soon the news of my stock spread among the mem-

bers of the neighbouring commissariat and in about three hours another group of patrols arrived in a most sociable and pleasant mood, and were offered the hospitality they had come to enjoy. Throughout that day I received visits from four or five such parties of from two to five men each, all of whom expressed the same gratitude for my entertainment of them. This was exactly what I wanted from them, and thus by night I had not only overcome their suspicions but had won their support, so I kept up the levees for some time, inviting them every now and then to "help me in my work."

Shortly afterwards new decrees were published with regard to firearms. In these decrees it was ordered that anyone possessing arms should, before the expiration of the day following the decree, hand over their arms to their respective commissariats. Any infringement of the law would be followed by immediate arrest and capital punishment without trial.

Considering the fact that I was in possession of not less than four revolvers with ample ammunition and one rifle, and had all of them hidden in my apartment, I decided it were wiser to take them over to the building where my garage was located and secrete them more carefully there. On the morning of that decree a general whom I knew asked me to take his two carbines of German make and keep them for myself as he was afraid to have them in his house and did not want to see them given up to the Bolsheviks. I accepted his gift with pleasure in spite of the obvious difficulty in getting them home.

Since it was too far to risk carrying them through the streets to my big garage, I took them to my shed in the yard of the Armoured Car Division. I succeeded in carrying them past the Bolsheviks who took no notice of me, and locked myself up in my garage, where I dismantled the carbines into small parts and wrapped them in a large piece of tarpaulin with motor car parts stuck in at both ends of the roll.

With my bundle thus made, I started out with my wife and a friend who were undertaking to transport my revolvers in hat boxes. In one of the streets we were overtaken by a lorry carrying half a dozen Bolshevik soldiers. Just as the lorry was passing us, it dropped a chain which I picked up, shouting at them at the same time to stop. As they hove to, the happy thought struck me that the surest way of avoiding a search in the streets on this day of the arms decree was to drive to our destination in the lorry with the Bolsheviks; so, when I caught them up, I said:

"Well, comrades, tit for tat. I saved your chain, now you save me a walk to the end of this street!"

"With pleasure, *Tovaristch*!" they answered, "jump in quick, we are in a hurry!" and they helped me up.

My wife was staring at this scene with astonishment and fear, but did not say anything for we had agreed that on such occasions we would ignore each other as though we were not acquainted. Thus my bundle and I travelled safely in the same vehicle with the Bolsheviks to the house I wanted to reach. I had taken the risk of leaving my wife and her

friend alone with the revolvers because I knew that women would not be stopped in connection with the new law as the Bolsheviks wouldn't give women the credit of having sufficient pluck to carry concealed arms through the streets after such a severe decree.

The only thing my wife was afraid of was that the cardboard bottom of the boxes might give way under the weight of the revolvers and then there would be a tragedy. But fortunately everything went smoothly and we both came safely to the house where we hid the firearms so well that I imagine they are still there at the present moment waiting for us to come back and take them out.

CHAPTER XVIII

AWAY FROM MOSCOW AT LAST

ONE morning as I was working in the garage my mother-in-law's steward came to me and said:

"Your wife has just telephoned me that her mother has been arrested and taken to the Cheka and asks you to remain quietly in the garage and not go home on any account, as the house is being watched. Your wife herself has gone on to the Cheka to help her mother in any way she can."

This was terrifying news that left me aghast. I knew how easy it was to be sent to the Cheka and how difficult, if not impossible, it was to get out of it.

Naturally I began racking my brains thinking of a way to rescue my mother-in-law; but I failed to arrive at any decision, knowing how strongly the Cheka was guarded. After five or six hours spent in the most awful anxiety, a telephone message came that my wife and mother were safely at home and that all was well.

When I hurried home, I found that my mother-in-law had been arrested on a charge of "speculating" in sugar, namely, that in January she had bought a pood (36 pounds) of sugar and now, in July, they came to ask where that sugar was and what she had

done with it! When it is remembered that my mother-in-law fed usually more than twelve people, there was nothing astonishing in the fact that during the six months the sugar had disappeared. The Cheka came to know of the purchase of that sugar through the same President of the House Committee, Slavin, who had previously tried to get at me.

It was evident that the attitude of the Bolsheviks towards my mother-in-law and me was increasingly threatening, so that our stay in Moscow was daily becoming more unsafe. Although everyone was trying to persuade her to leave the city and go south she continued to hesitate. Finally this decision was forced upon her by the Bolsheviks themselves and we were really glad when she received an order from the authorities to leave Moscow within three days as belonging to the bourgeois class and therefore forfeiting her right of residence in the capital. It was at a time when the authorities were endeavouring to have as many people as possible leave Moscow, owing to the shortage of bread. The bourgeois class naturally were the first to go in order to save the provisions for the working class.

This immediately raised the difficulty of obtaining the necessary papers to authorise her to travel southward. But, as it was impossible to remain in Moscow after receiving the order to evacuate without the risk of being arrested, my mother-in-law decided to wait for these papers in the sanitarium twenty miles away to which I had previously taken the sick lady in my car. We decided that my wife, being the only member of the family whom the Bolsheviks had not

disturbed, should remain in Moscow to worry about the travelling permits, while I should proceed to liquidate my motor car business as soon as possible and then follow my mother-in-law.

In a few days I had wound up my business, sold the cars and was off to the railway station accompanied by my wife who came along to see me safely away. While we were standing on the platform near the train, we noticed that a Bolshevik patrol was arresting all the men who intended leaving by this train. On discovering this, we hastily blessed each other and I crawled under the train and up into a truck on the next line beyond it and only when my train was in motion did I board it from the opposite side and, without leaning out of the window, nodded to my wife and thus got away safely.

Although I have commented little on the part played by my wife in all of these, from the viewpoint of the reader's normal world, unimaginably nerve-wracking days, no one who may read this narrative can fail to appreciate what must have been my feelings at leaving her in such surroundings, from which I had crawled away like the hunted animal that I was. My throat fills when I think back now to the battle between my pride in her well-proven coolness and courage and my love and fear for her that nearly overcame my better judgment and pulled me from the train to return to her side.

When I reached the village of the sanitarium, I found that it was packed with people and that there wasn't a single room in the place where I could pass the night. Scouting about, I asked the former police

master to allow me to sleep up in his hay-loft to which he gladly consented. This was handy for me as I could always get my food in the sanitarium.

Life here was slow but gratifyingly quiet. To our great relief my wife arrived in a few days and reported that all the papers necessary for herself and her mother to proceed to the South were promised without difficulty for Ukrainian subjects in view of the fact that they had properties in the Ukraine; but for me it was impossible to obtain any documents and therefore I could not legally leave Moscow.

This worried my wife a great deal, but I tried to reassure her by reminding her that this was not the first time we had had to use extraordinary means to be able to get through safely.

As something had to be done at once, I went to the doctors in the sanitarium and asked them to issue me a document certifying that my health required rest and life in the South. When they pronounced this impracticable, I went back into Moscow the following morning to one of the hospitals where I had a friend in the chief surgeon, who was an ex-medical officer in the Imperial Army. Though he gave me the required certificate straight away, to be quite on the safe side I asked several of my acquaintances to give me references stating that I had been employed by them as a chauffeur. Thus being in possession of a regular archive of papers and certificates, I established touch with all sorts of bag-carriers and speculators to try to find out from them which was the easiest way and at which points to cross the Ukrainian frontier.

My wife and mother-in-law, having been recognised by the Bolsheviks as Ukrainian subjects, had the right to travel in the so-called "Ukrainian State Train" from Moscow to Kieff, whereas I had to follow another route that is through Kursk, where I had to change trains and find out for myself the best way of crossing the frontier and getting to Kieff.

I did not want to leave before knowing exactly the day of the departure of the Ukrainian train and in the meantime busied myself with finding places to hide various things which we could not take away with us. In some houses I hid the things under the floor, in others I took out stones from the walls thus making therein sufficient place to hold a considerable amount of jewelry and other things, replacing the stones and carefully covering the spot with plaster and whitewash.

At last, when the day of the departure of my people was fixed, I negotiated a ticket and place in the train for myself through various commission agents open and secret, thus arranging to leave Moscow two days before my wife and her mother, meet them in Kieff and prepare everything for the farther journey to the Crimea.

Having at last secured my ticket, I gathered my most necessary things into two small bags, donned my chauffeur's clothes, bade farewell to my wife and mother-in-law, who were hiding in Moscow until the time of their departure, and went to the station.

Once there I took great delight in my final circumvention of the Red guards and agents, of the Cheka and, having found my seat, I sat nervously

waiting for what seemed a century until the train moved to take me safely out of that torture chamber of Moscow to an unknown future in the South. Thus ended the last of my days in that ancient capital of Russia, where I had known all the gradations of life from driving my own 150 H.P. racing car to being a public taxi driver with a price on my head; where I was one day within a few hours of that promised trip with the Bolshevik leaders which might have changed the whole course of present day Russian history and where finally I crawled away under the cars to avoid a small Bolshevik guard.

CHAPTER XIX

OUT BY THE WATER-SPOUT

ON the 21st of August, 1918, when my train left the Moscow station and all the passengers had taken their seats I found myself occupying a four place compartment with a man I had previously known in Moscow.

From his conversation it appeared that he had every possible document, certificate, pass and so forth including a German one, to travel to the Ukraine. With the whole compartment to ourselves, we had some very good tea and then comfortably arranged ourselves for the night with plenty of room to lie down.

When our train arrived early in the morning at Orel, the capital of the department of that name, the train guard, who was not at heart a Bolshevik, warned all the passengers that here there would be two searches, one by the members of the Revolutionary War Council and the other by agents of the Cheka, and advised them to hide carefully any valuables they had or anything that might compromise them.

As I was carrying several thousand roubles, I gave all but 500 of it to the guard, retaining this small sum which was the maximum amount the Bolsheviks allowed a passenger to carry.

The search was very minute and they looked everywhere one could think of, even in the linings of our clothes. They took from some of the passengers every kopeck they had in excess of 500 roubles but they did not arrest anyone this time. When the train left Orel at the end of about two hours, the guard told me that he had heard at the station that searches would be made at every stop, as the Bolsheviks were trying to find some one in the train. I asked him to find out at the first big station whom it was they were looking for. At the following four stops the searches were not very thorough and gave us no great trouble, but when we arrived at the next big station, the guard reported to me that, on asking a Red soldier whom they were looking for, he was told that it was an officer who had left Moscow by that train and about whom they had wired to all the stations, and he mentioned my name. Again I felt my brow bead with cold perspiration, but I did not let the guard see that I was nervous and quickly returned to my compartment to think out some way of eluding them once more.

Soon the guard appeared in the door and announced that in half an hour we would reach a big station, where we should have to undergo the most serious and dangerous search of all. I went out and paced up and down the corridor, puzzling over what I could do. Then came to me an idea which I at once put into practice. Fortunately I remembered that in one of my bags I had two packs of cards. One compartment of our carriage was re-

served for railway officials and Bolshevik railway gendarmes.

With my cards in my pocket I entered their compartment and asked the men if they would join me in a game of cards to pass the time, to which they gladly consented.

I forgot to mention that in my boot I had the documents of my soldier servant with which I had successfully travelled from Orenburg to Moscow and which I had brought with me in case of any emergency. During the game we discussed the approaching search at that next big station, and they all agreed that this one was going to be very minute and serious, especially in regard to documents. While I was telling the Red soldiers some sort of a funny story, I pulled the documents out of my boot and laid them on the table, saying:

"I am doing this so as not to interrupt the game when they come along to see them!"

As the play proceeded, I noticed that some of them read the name of my servant on my documents and I was growing hopeful that my little plan would come through nicely. In the meantime I kept up a running fire of funny stories which were supposed to have happened to me during my life as a chauffeur, so that by the time we arrived at the dangerous station my associates had become quite used to me and confidently believed that I belonged to their class and shared their ideas. They became very familiar with me and many times slapped me on the knee or the shoulder saying:

"You are a nut, *Tovaristch*!" and I pretended to

be terribly pleased with myself and to appreciate highly their approval.

Finally the train stopped and, in a little while, the heads of two commissars appeared in the doorway.

"Good morning, *Tovaristchi!*" said they, addressing our party. "Is there a passenger among you?"

"Yes there is!" said my partner pointing at me, "the one who is now dealing, and here are his documents; but he is one of our crowd!" the man continued, answering for me.

"No, this is not the one!" said the commissar, and withdrew closing the door behind him. I immediately told, to the delight of my companions, a little story I had heard in Moscow about a commissar.

Perhaps half an hour after the search had been completed the train moved on and I heaved a sigh of relief. In two hours we should be in Kursk, another big provincial town of South Russia, and in close proximity to the frontier. I rather feared that station as there I had to change my train for another one to leave two hours later. But I didn't despair and remained confident in my good fortune.

While nearing Kursk I took my money back from the guard and, having rolled the bills lengthwise as tight as I could, I let the roll down my trousers to the height of my knee by a string which I tied through a hole I made near the top of my trousers pocket. In my purse I kept only about 1500 roubles.

As soon as the train drew up in the station, all the carriages were at once occupied by a considerable number of armed men who began to inspect documents and search the passengers.

I had already put my servant's papers back in my boot for the twofold reason that my passes to leave Russia and to enter Ukraine, which I supposed would have to be shown here to enable me to board the other train, were made out in my own name and I really had no safe place in which I could hide these passes and all the other documents I carried certifying to my career as a chauffeur.

Feeling decidedly nervous over the weakness of my position after what I had seen of the other searches and that some trouble was brewing for me, I thought to jump out of the train on the opposite side from the station and there hide among the empty trucks; but as I looked out of the window, I saw the train was closely surrounded by Red soldiers so that I had no option but to return to my compartment and see what would happen. In spite of my serious and nearly hopeless position I could not believe that I should be taken back to Moscow and be prevented from going to Kieff to meet my wife, so I just sat and waited.

When the commissar come to our compartment and opened the door, the first words he said were:

"Your documents!"

I quietly gave him my passport, which I had filled out myself in Moscow. He looked at it very attentively and muttered to himself:

"What the devil does this mean? The name is correct but all the rest is different from our information."

Then turning to me he asked:

"Were you an officer some time ago?"

"Never!" I answered, "this is what I was," and I produced all my chauffeur's documents both private and official, all stating that I had been a chauffeur for at least the last ten years in various places and with different people. He fumbled my papers for a long time and I was already beginning to think that the whole thing would come round in my favour, when to my despair another commissar came along and said:

"Don't hesitate, *Tovaristch*. The name corresponds all right so send him to the Cheka; there they will soon clear up the matter. Don't bother any more about him."

With the acquiescence of the first commissar I was immediately placed under arrest and taken out of the carriage to the station, queerly enough under the escort of the Red guards who were my companions in the game of cards. After a nervous wait of an hour until the entire search was finished, I was escorted through the streets by the same men, accompanied by several commissars, right into the centre of the town to the "Revolutionary War Council," where I was at once taken before the President of the Council, a fierce looking sailor.

"Ah! So they did catch you after all, my friend!" he jeered at me.

"They have certainly caught me," I replied, "but the question is whether I'm the one they wanted to catch."

"Oh, we shall soon find this out," the President responded. "Were you an officer?"

"If I had been an officer, I would have been in the

Volunteer Army months ago; but, as you see, I am still here and have been until now carrying on my old work in Moscow," whereupon I again produced my chauffeur's documents.

"And where were you during the war?" he went on.

"I was at the front in the cavalry," I answered, producing a cavalry certificate which I had in my pocket. "After being wounded, I left the cavalry and secured a detail as a chauffeur in the Motor car section of the 9th Army." To which effect I also had an official certificate in which I had replaced the word Chief with the word Chauffeur. The President and his associates deliberated for a while and decided to send me to the local Cheka for another investigation, with the intention, if this would not reveal anything, of locking me up in prison until further particulars could be obtained from Moscow.

So I was again escorted through the town towards the railway station, near which the Cheka was located.

At the inquiry I was asked the same questions and answered in the same manner. The President of the Cheka confirmed the decision of the Revolutionary War Council and I was sent under escort of the same men, my card partners, to a gloomy room in the floor above in the same building. I noticed that the window in the room had no bars and this was evidently the reason why my escort was ordered to remain in the room with me. I thought to myself how fortunate it was that they were not present at either investigation and consequently did not know that I had

been arrested on my Moscow documents, which they had not seen, instead of on those which I had displayed at the card game. If they had known my deception, their attitude would naturally have changed; while, as matters now stood, their feeling toward me was one of sympathy and they criticised freely the action of the commissars:

"It is incredible!" they protested, "that the commissars cannot distinguish an honest worker from an officer, and the result is that a poor fellow has to suffer from their stupidity!"

The room was very small, only a few yards square and nearly filled by its three benches and table.

As for some reason or other I was not searched when arrested, I was still in possession of my money and my cards, so that when it became quite dark, we again started our game by the light of a bit of candle stuck on the table. As the prisoners in this place were fortunately allowed to purchase their own food, I asked one of the guards to go out and buy me some bread, cheese and sausages.

"And to make the time pass quicker," I added, "try to ferret out somewhere three or four bottles of vodka. Here is money enough for it all."

The two Bolsheviks were delighted with the idea and one of them hurried out to make the purchases.

About an hour later the man returned with a broad smile and with everything I had specified. When the Bolsheviks grabbed the bottles and began dancing round with them, I followed suit to try to show that I was as carefree and happy as they were.

Then we began to eat and, when I drank the first glass of vodka, I cheerfully remarked:

"That's better, and tomorrow I can go to Moscow or to Petrograd or any other old place; only my wife will be anxious about me in Kieff. All the same, I'll soon join her, whatever happens!"

My companions had evidently not had vodka for a long time, as it went to their heads very quickly and they soon were drunk. My idea all this time was to make them thoroughly drunk, wait until they should fall asleep and then slip out of the window and crawl down the water pipe.

I had had time to find out that the window did not overlook the street but opened above a small abandoned garden.

As we ate I kept telling all sorts of funny stories to my Bolshevik guests, whose tongues were already loosening. After we had finished our meal but were still drinking, the candle went out and left the room lighted only by the moon.

Soon one of the three guards fell asleep with his head on his hands. Though I had not drunk as much as they, profiting by the darkness to pour many glasses over my shoulder, I pretended to be frightfully drunk and, lying down on the bench, I mumbled a few incoherent words and began snoring. The other two soldiers continued to drink without entirely losing their heads, but listening to their conversation, I realised that they were not far behind the other and would soon be well under. My fiery ally accomplished his task and in less than half an hour there was such a terrific snoring in the room

that I felt sure the stupor of my guards would last for at least three or four hours. Out of precaution, however, I lay still and snored regularly for another quarter of an hour. Then I got up carefully, took some bread, cheese and sausage from the table, stuck it all into one of my bags, both of which I fastened to my back by passing my belt through the handles, opened the window, and, having made sure that there was no one about, swung over to the water spout and slid slowly down, trying not to make any noise. The ground was about 30 to 35 feet below the window. When I had made about half of this distance, I suddenly felt the leader was not firm and stopped dead in fear that the pipe might break and either kill me in the fall or awaken all the Bolsheviks in the place. I had time to curse the plumber for having made such a flimsy job of it.

Hanging in that most uncomfortable position I was trying to think what was the best thing to do, as it was no use stopping there stuck to the pipe like a bat until someone should see me and collar me again. So I decided to risk it and began sliding down again. I had only made another foot or two when I suddenly realised that I was flying earthward witn my hands clasped to a short length of the pipe—and fortunately landed in a bush. I was not hurt but was terrified to hear somebody come out from under the other side of the bush and cry:

"Help, hold him!"

I could only see the face in the dark but that was a large enough target for the shot I landed in the

middle of it with all the strength of my arm and sent him to the ground.

I stood listening for a moment. Apparently the noise of the falling ladder had awakened the Bolsheviks inside, as voices, at first hardly audible then more alarming, began reaching my ear. Examining my victim, I found he was palpably drunk as well as under the immediate influence of my soporific; so I grabbed a piece of fallen plaster from the ground, rubbed it over his hands, knees and feet, stuck the piece of pipe in his arms and ran for it. Without difficulty I cleared the low garden fence and hugged the walls through the dark streets which I thought would take me in the right direction.

It was about 1 a.m. when I emerged from the town and lay under a bush to catch my breath. Lying there I began running over all the details of the last hours and chuckled contentedly as I pictured to myself the tipsy escort and the commissars of the Cheka collaring the poor duffer whom I had decorated with the smashed nose, plaster and rainpipe and left under the open window which looked in upon the traces of the night orgy.

A little later I rose and started on. After doing about six miles I noticed the lights of a station in the distance and, out of precaution, struck farther into the country, leaving the station on my right. Only after having walked well past it I turned back towards the railway line and finally lay down in the ditch beside the track.

The moon had completely disappeared behind the clouds and a fine drizzling rain was now falling.

About an hour later I heard the sound of a whistle and the noise of an approaching train, which I could see was just coming into the station from the direction of Kursk. As it drew out of the station and was still at half speed, I jumped it and, scrambling into a 4th class carriage, lay down on a top bunk and fell fast asleep. As all the passengers were apparently as fatigued as myself, I was able to stow away without being noticed by anyone. My lucky star was evidently still above the horizon.

CHAPTER XX

OVER THE FRONTIER TO KIEFF

IN the morning I was awakened by a loud conversation from which I made out that the train was nearing Korenevo, the frontier station of Soviet Russia and the Ukraine, now occupied by German troops. It was already daylight but the sky was dark and it was raining. Soon the train stopped in the open field and was again overrun with Red guards who shouted:

"All passengers turn out here. The train is not going any further."

I tumbled out with my bags and followed the other passengers on ahead of the train to a place where several tables were set right in the open field with commissars standing behind them.

Suddenly I heard someone pronounce my name. This gave me a shock at first, but, as I looked round, I saw that it was my friend who had travelled with me in the compartment from Moscow. I made him a sign to be quiet with regard to my name and, drawing him aside, asked:

"Why are you so late?"

"Our train left Kursk eight hours after schedule time. And how is it that you are here? I thought

that you had been taken to the Cheka and I was awfully anxious about you."

I told him all about my experiences of the night and with him approached the tables where, if the search and the inspection of documents were successfully weathered, we could hire a cart and without difficulty drive through the ten mile neutral zone beyond which lay the territory occupied by the Germans.

Inasmuch as the Cheka had kept my documents with my permits to leave Soviet Russia and enter the Ukraine, my mind was busily occupied trying to work out some scheme to slip this last Bolshevik net at the frontier. The rule was that anyone found in possession of any officer's documents or of such papers which would prove his relationship to some anti-Bolshevik party or organization was taken about a hundred yards into the field and shot before the public without further comment, the possession of the papers being in itself an all-sufficient *causus mori.*

When my turn came they found nothing in my bags, but to my dismay ordered me to take off my clothes. As this was an awkward, general rule they applied to both men and women I had no option. Strangely enough, though the Bolsheviks shook my clothes and looked into every pocket, they never noticed the money that was hidden inside my trousers. While I was dressing again the commissars were examining the contents of my purse, where, after my purchases for the revel of the previous evening, I had roughly 1000 roubles. They left

me only 500 roubles and, looking at my servant's documents, asked me:

"And where is your permit to enter the Ukraine, also the one to quit Soviet Russia?"

"I haven't any such thing!" I answered.

"Well, this means that you can't get a frontier pass," was the commissar's comforting reply. Then he called a Red guard and ordered him:

"Take this man to the chief commissar to pass on his case and see that he deposits with him these 500 roubles!"

As I was passing a group of passengers, a lady, whom I had known in Moscow, hailed me and said in despair:

"Just think, they have taken the gold watch which belonged to my dear mother and which I have always worn round my neck since her death."

As I was asking her to give me a description of the watch, the Red guard caught me by the arm and dragged me away, interrupting our conversation.

In order to prevent my escort from being present and taking part in my interview with the chief commissar, who had his quarters in a railway carriage, I put a note of 100 roubles in his hand as we came up to the door of the carriage and said to him:

"You will receive another if you remain here until I come out."

I gave up the 500 roubles to the chief and signed my servant's name in his book.

At the end of this table I noticed a heap of valuables and jewelry which had been confiscated from

the passengers and among them the lady's watch. While the commissar was completing the entry in the book, I pulled out of my pocket a bit of crumpled damp paper with my right hand and, leaning with the left on the commissar's table so as to cover the watch, I said to him:

"Comrade, I had a bit of bad luck. As I was coming here in the rain and pulling the money which I deposited with you out of my pocket I dropped the pass which I received after the inspection of my documents into a puddle and this is what it turned into!" and I showed him the little dirty wet paper.

"Show me your documents," he demanded.

"Sorry, but I can't possibly do so, *Tovaristch,* as the commissar who searched me kept the documents until I should return with a chit from you saying that I had deposited the money, probably fearing that I might cross the frontier with the money if I remained in possession of my papers." He examined my little paper minutely, thought rather a long time over it, and said:

"Yes, it's true that with this defaced pass you would have difficulty, I shall give you another!"

As he turned his back to the desk to get something from a small cupboard on the wall, I profited by the moment to slip the watch into my pocket. On turning back he didn't notice anything wrong but scribbled on a big sheet of paper and, handing it to me, said:

"Here's another pass for you. You'll be all right with this one!"

I must say that as I took the paper from his hand

I wondered inwardly how some of the Bolshevik officials could be so inexorably severe and others so gullible.

When I left the carriage I found the soldier faithfully waiting for me, rather for his money, so I gave him another 100 roubles before he took me back to the table where I had been searched. At his confirmation of the fact that I had deposited the money with the chief and on my exhibiting the frontier pass, I received my two bags and went off to hire a wagon for the further journey.

Near one of the wagons I saw my Moscow friend and cautiously handed her the watch, which she received with a radiant smile and profound thanks. About a dozen wagons had already been hired by the passengers who were waiting for others to join them as it was only practicable to cross the neutral zone in large parties in view of a great number of freebooters who looted travellers with the impunity of a region devoid of all police machinery. While crossing the zone we saw one of these bands, counting about fifteen men, evidently making an attempt to follow us; but, as between them and our caravan there happened to be a deep ravine with a marshy bottom which they could not cross, we got away safely. Personally I did not worry much about these robbers both because I had nothing attractive for them among my effects and because they seemed such a trivial difficulty now that I was once over the Soviet border. But a doctor from Kieff, who was my companion in the wagon and who was apparently carrying valuables with him, was trembling with

fright and begged me to assist him in case of attack. Fortunately no raid occurred and we arrived safely at a village where the first German guards appeared and ordered us to halt.

The sound of that command and the sight of two German soldiers in a Russian village upset me terribly and it was with disgust that I asked them in German what they wanted. They said they must see our frontier passes and examine our effects, which was done to prevent people from transporting arms or ammunition from Soviet Russia into the Ukrainian territory under German occupation.

Not finding anything they let us go but ordered us to drive to the railway station there in the village where there was a German quarantine depot that would put us through a medical examination and keep us under surveillance for from three weeks to a month.

At the far from pleasing thought of losing so much time, I asked the driver how far it was to the next station and, finding that it was no more than six miles, I arranged with him to take me there by a roundabout route promising him a handsome sum for the extra trip.

To accomplish this I had to arrange also to work my wagon and that carrying my compartment friend and the woman from Moscow to the rear position in the caravan and also to deceive the German soldiers, which was not so simple a task. For this purpose I asked them to show me the way for the caravan to get to the quarantine station and started our train along the road pointed out. When we had

gone a certain distance, I dropped off our wagon and, walking along beside that of my friends, I explained to them the situation and my plan and gave them the opportunity to follow me. They were, of course, very glad to do so and, as soon as we were round a corner out of sight of the German soldiers, we turned off and followed another road trying to keep as far as possible from the railway, which was closely patrolled by the German guards.

About three hours sufficed to bring us to this second station, where were some hundred people waiting for German passes. Although it was already 10.30 a.m., the German lieutenant had not yet come to the bureau. Annoyed at the idea of having to wait for all these hundred people who were ahead of us, I went straight to his private apartment and rang the bell. The door was opened by an orderly.

"I must see Herr Lieutenant as soon as possible, please," I said. He disappeared and came back at once to lead me to the officer.

"Do you speak German?" asked the lieutenant.

When I answered in the affirmative he continued: "It is so pleasant to meet some one speaking my own language, as I have not seen a soul for the last two months with whom I could talk of anything save the stupid routine of my office."

"It is just because I know your language," I answered, "that I have come to ask you if you will be good enough to expedite the issue of passes for me and my friends with whom I'm travelling to Kieff on urgent business, in order to enable us to catch the train leaving at one o'clock."

He at once buckled on his belt and, as he did so, he said:

"If your documents are in order I shall certainly not keep you back and you will be in good time for the train." On our way to the station he added:

"In return for my prompt issue of your passes, I shall also expect a good turn from you. If you think you can finish them in time, I would like to have you bring in documents from, say, thirty of the waiting Russians and translate them to me. I do not know a word of Russian and, when there is no Russian here who speaks German, I lose too much of my time over this exchange of Russian documents for German ones."

I snapped at the opportunity, for I saw the chance of getting German documents without difficulty. In the station I collected the papers from my three friends and from twenty-six Russians and took them into the lieutenant's office. I translated to him the twenty-nine Russian permits to enter the Crimea and then read off an imaginary one of my own while he wrote out the German document I so dearly coveted. Then he stowed away the Russian permits without verifying their number, directing me to inform the others waiting outside that he would issue their papers after two o'clock. So I went to the waiting room and distributed the twenty-nine documents, giving his message to the others as directed.

"And what about yours?" asked my friend, knowing that I had no permit to enter the Ukraine.

"It's all right, I am coming with you."

"I don't understand it all," he exclaimed, "what

ever did you do to that German to get a pass out of him?"

"Nothing much," I replied, "it was only a matter of arithmetic as he did not think of comparing the number of permits which I handed him with the number of passes which he issued."

How distinctly I remember that just then I slipped my fingers into my watch pocket let into the top of my leather belt and discovered a small folded paper. As I drew it out and read it, I was dumbfounded. It was a letter addressed to the Ukrainian foreign secretary from a man in Moscow in which the latter requested his friend the Secretary to give us all his assistance and support in obtaining all the documents we might require. Had this letter been found on me during the search I should certainly have been shot.

In about half an hour we boarded the train and began on our further journey towards Kieff. I must admit that it was a great pleasure to travel in a train which was kept up to the normal standards of a civilised country and where the number of passengers was strictly limited to the seats available; but it was humiliating to realise that this was obtained only through the intervention of the Germans, who were Russia's deadly foes. As I had a whole bunk to myself I immediately stretched out and squared my account with some of the lost hours by sleeping until I was awakened as the train neared Kieff.

CHAPTER XXI

KIEFF TO THE CRIMEA

KIEFF presented the same aspect of perfect order, though it made my heart bleed to see German soldiers walking along the streets as though they were in one of their own towns. At the station I took an *izvostchik* and went to look up some acquaintances who lived in one of the Kieff boarding houses.

In spite of all the disagreeable features of the German occupation I was inexpressibly relieved and constantly rejoiced over the fact that I was no more in danger and that I did not have to devise means of avoiding conflicts or arrest and of deceiving this or that official.

And, peculiarly enough, it happened that in spite of all the difficulties I had encountered on the way, I arrived in Kieff on exactly the day planned and only eight hours late at that, which would give me the two full days that I needed before the arrival of my wife and her mother in which to arrange everything for our further journey to the Crimea.

At the office of the German Commandant I was informed that they could do nothing before I presented to them the papers of those who desired to go to the Crimea. But they promised me, however,

to have all the necessary permits prepared beforehand so as to enable me to close everything immediately on presentation of the passports.

Having thus done all that I could, I began wandering about this town which I liked so well and which I had known from my earliest days. It always appealed to me as one of the most beautiful cities of Russia with all its ancient churches, monasteries, and catacombs. Along the high bank of the river Dnieper, which is itself of great beauty, are situated lovely parks and gardens full of flowers and fine old trees.

After three days of worry and impatience I at last received word from my wife that their train had been held up in Moscow and that they were due in Kieff in four days, that is, two days after I received this news. The only thing I could do was to wait as patiently as possible for their arrival. On the morning they were due I went to the station only to learn that their train had again been delayed in Moscow and that it was impossible to say when it would leave. Naturally I was racked with anxiety over the possibility of more difficulties being put in the way of my wife's and mother's departure. Every day as I went to the station to inquire about the wretched train, I received always the same answer—that there was nothing definite.

To try and find some distraction, I began visiting my numerous friends and acquaintances who had remained in Kieff through all the troublous times. They told me about the atrocities committed by the

Bolsheviks while they held power in the town before the Germans wiped them out.

I especially remember the story told me by one of our friends which has always remained deeply imprinted on my mind and which proved with what fine spirit and nobility many Russian officers died at the hands of vicious and brutal murderers.

There were in pre-war times two inseparable friends, students at a University, Ivan and Basil. They were always together and shared everything, fortune and misfortune, wealth and poverty, differing only in their political views.

At the outbreak of the war Ivan immediately enlisted as a volunteer, while Basil sought protection from danger and mobilisation by securing a position in the administration in the rear. By the time the Revolution broke out, Ivan had sustained several wounds, received many decorations and earned a captain's commission.

With the Bolsheviks' accession to power, Ivan decided to make his way south and join the Volunteer Army which was then in process of formation. Basil on the other hand of his own will enlisted in the Red Army.

As fate would have it, Ivan was arrested and condemned to death by the Bolsheviks while he was trying to reach the South, and this same mistress of the fortuitous brought him face to face with his old chum and companion Basil, in command of the firing squad detailed to execute sentence upon him. They gazed into each other's eyes but neither of them at first gave a sign of recognition.

"Forgive me, Vania!" said Basil, without a sign of feeling in his face or voice suddenly addressing his friend, "if they fail to kill you instantly. It is the first time they have ever shot anybody!"

"You too, forgive me, Basil!" Ivan answered quite calmly, "if I do not die immediately, for it is also the first time I have ever been shot!"

The command was given, the volley followed and Ivan went straight to his eternal rest, shot through by several bullets, while Basil turned away to continue his tortures upon the class he had forsaken. This story, which epitomizes so much to me after my experiences with firing squads, will never leave my mind.

Another few days passed and still I heard nothing from my wife about their departure from Moscow; nor could I obtain any further news at the station. I became so anxious and nervous that I decided if there was again nothing on the following day I should return straight to Moscow.

When no news arrived the following day, I started, in spite of all my friends' protestations, to ferret out papers for my return journey to Moscow. But this was no easy task. Two days running I tramped the floors of every possible institution to try to secure some sort of passport to admit me to Soviet Russia but without avail. When I mentioned my wish to return, everybody looked at me as though I were mad. Finally at one of the institutions I was advised to go without any documents at all and I had made up my mind to do so when, on my return home, I found to my infinite relief a wire from my wife

saying that they would be at Kieff on the following day.

In the morning I met them at the station, took them to a hotel and at once proceeded to the German Commandant's offices to obtain passes for the Crimea.

"Are my papers prepared?" I asked the junior lieutenant. "Here are the required passports."

"Yes, they are about ready. You can come and get them in five days," was the reply.

"Why in five days?" I almost shouted at him. "I was promised that the passes would be delivered to me the moment I should present the passports of the persons concerned."

"Never mind what anybody promised you. We can't do business at that rate," he retorted preparing to go.

"Look here!" I said to him, deciding to try extreme measures as I pulled out of my pocket two Ukrainian banknotes. "I have already bought my tickets and booked seats in tonight's train for Odessa!" He then came up close to me and I shoved the notes in his half outstretched hand. That did it, and he very politely said:

"Will you be so kind as to wait here just a second?" and disappeared into a neighbouring room.

In half an hour with the passes in my hand in place of one hundred *Karbovantzi* (Ukrainian money unit) I went home in the best spirits I had known these many months. That same evening we left Kieff carefree and almost happy.

In the morning a gentleman who was my com-

panion in the compartment warned me that in a few minutes we should be passing through that part of Odessa which a few days previously had sustained such terrible damages from the explosion of the Odessa gunpowder and ammunition factories caused by Bolshevik agents. The impression of what we saw was overwhelming. Right and left as far as the eye could reach the place was simply a jungle of broken stones, fragments of shells, shell cases and complete shells of various sizes. Of the once beautiful paddocks and fruit gardens, there remained only a tangle of trees and stumps, all of this devastation stretching away for two or three miles in every direction.

At 11 a.m. our train pulled into the Odessa station where we were met by friends and taken to their home.

As a boat was sailing for the Crimea the following morning, we went aboard and basked for a day in the wonderful freedom and cleanliness of the sea where the Red hand of Bolshevism could not threaten and pollute. Daily and almost hourly we were enjoying new sensations of a freedom which could only be compared to the release of some galley slave from the chain that had bound him to his misery and his oar.

At 10 o'clock the next morning the boat cast anchor in the harbour of Sebastopol where it was to remain four hours, so we went ashore to visit the town and send a wire to my wife's sister in Yalta informing her of our arrival.

We arrived in Yalta that night when it was already

dark and, as the harbour was small, we took some time to come alongside the jetty. My sister-in-law met us and drove us to the estate they had rented about six miles from the town.

CHAPTER XXII

REVERSING THE CHASE ON A COMMISSAR

WE occupied a small house on the estate of my brother-in-law and were at last permitted to enjoy a good month of almost celestial life which we felt was fully deserved after the physical and mental strain we had gone through. At the end of this wonderful holiday my brother-in-law secured an apartment in town for us to occupy during the winter. After the first few days given to arranging our quarters, I began going about and listening to what people said to try to gauge the general state of mind.

Before our arrival the German Commandant had issued an order forbidding Russian officers to appear in uniforms so that all of them were in mufti. But even in plain clothes it is usually possible to recognise an army man and I noticed that there were a great many Russian officers about. I was so irritated and annoyed by the proclamation of the German Commandant that I deliberately ordered myself an officer's tunic and began wearing it on the streets. It was an amusing commentary that the German officers and men began saluting me. The next day, to my great pleasure, I found many other officers in tunics and they soon became quite numerous.

During these days a rumour began spreading

through Yalta that a revolution was brewing in Germany and that the German troops would consequently soon evacuate the Crimea and the other regions of Russia now under their occupation. And it was freely added that, as Yalta would be left without protection after the evacuation of the Germans, the Bolsheviks would soon take possession of the place and establish their Red régime.

As the presence of a considerable number of disguised Bolsheviks in Yalta afforded ample foundation for these rumours, I gathered together all the officers I could to warn them that, if we did not organise ourselves in time, the local Bolsheviks would no doubt seize the power the moment the Germans evacuated. Then there would be the regular bloodshed and the hounding of individual officers which we had all seen in Central Russia. Everyone at the meeting agreed with this point of view and enlisted to secure all the assistance we could towards a workable organisation. The results were immediately satisfactory and a great many answered our appeal, while societies were formed for collecting the necessary funds for the upkeep of an armed force and the whole thing developed in a most satisfactory way.

On a certain day all of the officers in Yalta were called together in a general meeting at which steps were taken for the appointment of a chief for the Yalta Garrison, a Commandant for the town and a Provost Marshal. These appointments were sent for confirmation to the General Headquarters of the Volunteer Army at Ekaterinodar. At the same time

it was proposed to form various bodies for the defence of the town and neighbourhood.

Another officer and myself, realising that one of the most important areas of Yalta which demanded special attention was the port, began the organisation of a picked body of men for the safeguarding of that area.

Our greatest and most vitiating difficulty was the lack of arms and ammunition for, with the exception of some of the officers who produced revolvers and rifles which up to that time had been kept hidden in the earth, all the rest were without arms of any kind. Our pressing necessity gave me the idea of seizing the arsenal with its collection of arms confiscated by the Germans at the time they occupied the Crimea, but this arsenal was still in the hands of the German authorities. The question raised a strenuous debate in view of the fact that many felt it would be out of the question to demand the delivery of the arms from the Germans; but I insisted upon the patent necessity of doing so. Finally our party secured the upper hand and all the officers present marched to the German Headquarters.

On arriving there a delegation was sent in and, to the great surprise of the German officials, addressed a formal demand to the Commandant for him to hand over immediately all the captured arms in his possession to the Chief of the Yalta Garrison.

At first the Germans refused, saying that they had already promised to deliver all arms and ammunition to the local professional unions of workmen, otherwise plainly speaking, to the local Bolshevik

organisations. It required quite a long time to dissuade them from taking such an absurd and dangerous step, but they finally yielded to our pressing demand to hand over the whole supply to the new Yalta Garrison. They even loaned us two lorries on which we loaded the stock of revolvers, rifles, machine guns, hand grenades and ammunition. All these supplies were taken to the Russian Commandant's Headquarters and there stored in two large rooms.

In the evening I had occasion to see the Commandant and, when I came to him, found him in an agitated frame of mind. He had tried to telephone me but was prevented by damaged lines. There he was in his new position as leader of all the Russian forces and not only had no one with him whom he could post as guard over his new found sinews of war, but he could not even leave the place himself to find anyone, because the doors of the rooms would not lock. In this mingled glory of Commandant and compulsory sentinel, I found him fuming over the diverse responsibilities of his post and received from him at once the command to collect and maintain a guard over our arsenal for the night until a regular force could be detailed for it the following morning. I immediately summoned five officers with whom I shared the first night's guard over the arms.

When relieved of my arsenal detail I proceeded to inspect the Port Section over which I had been given command and which up to that time numbered only six men. To my great satisfaction and

delight over thirty officers asked me that morning to put their names down for my section, most of them local residents who had gone through the first occupation of Yalta by the Red Army and had witnessed all the atrocities then committed by the Bolsheviks. They informed me that there was still in Yalta the Bolshevik commissar who signed all the death sentences of some 300 officers and had them at once thrown into the sea with a stone tied to their feet. After they had given me a detailed description of his appearance, I issued an order for his arrest on sight and for an immediate report to me of the fact.

The next important information I received was that in the Yalta harbour was a hundred-ton motor launch, the "Krim" which the Germans were going to sell to the Turks. The launch was one that the Germans had requisitioned from the Russian authorities when they first came to the Crimea and now wanted to cash in on it. I secured some more particulars on the subject and found that the Germans were preparing to sail on it at midnight together with their prospective purchasers, the Turks. I warned the crew that if they attempted to leave the port without my authority I would at once open fire on them.

When the evening came we were all watching from the end of the jetty. I noticed that there were lights inside the engine room and heard them hammering there as if the crew were repairing something. In order to see just what was happening I put off to the schooner in a small row-boat. Coming alongside I shouted in Russian:

"If there is anyone on board, come on deck."

A young man appeared in the uniform of a Russian volunteer and began cursing me. I looked him over carefully and recognised in him Commissar Yankel, the man I had ordered my officers to arrest.

"Oh!" I exclaimed, "you are exactly the fellow I want to see. Will you step down into my boat?"

Continuing with his swearing he refused to obey and it was only when I pointed my rifle at him that he finally came down. At that moment a German soldier also came on deck from the engine room and in his turn levelled his rifle at me, but I shouted to him:

"You lower your gun and don't move for my detachment is behind you and will blow you to pieces if you do not obey!"

He grounded his rifle and stood still, while I profited by his Teutonic military training and in two or three splashes of my oars disappeared behind another boat lying in the harbour.

At the end of the jetty I landed my prisoner and took him to the billet of the Fort Section. During our search of him we found proofs of his membership in various Bolshevik organisations and of his contact with Moscow. For two hours I plied him with questions and finally got him to own up that he was sent to Yalta from Moscow for spying purposes. He also admitted having signed the death sentences a year ago but defended himself by saying that he was compelled to do it by his superiors. During the whole inquiry he behaved so insolently and used such appalling language regarding officers of the Impe-

rial Army that, inasmuch as all Bolshevik spies were regarded by our forces as outlaws, I did not hesitate to pronounce for him the death penalty. To make matters quite clear I called two more of my officers and confronted them with the prisoner. They testified that with his own hand he had shot officers and even women while he was commissar of Yalta.

Among the papers found on him there was one of exceptional interest, a report from him to the Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army giving full details of the new anti-Bolshevik organisations recently formed in Yalta in view of the impending German evacuation. This alone was sufficient proof of his guilt.

Our difficulty was how to execute our sentence since all round us were numerous German patrols whose members were becoming rather sympathetic with the Bolshevik ideas, and growing so insubordinate through this Red infection that their officers had no influence over them. As there was no place to imprison Yankel, I decided to keep him under guard until the Germans should leave.

In the outside surface of the jetty was a small chamber which could hold about three men and from which it was impossible to escape without outside help, so I made up my mind to put him there. I tied his hands behind his back and bound his mouth with a towel to prevent him from making a fuss. I also posted some officers in such a position that they might warn me if they saw a German patrol coming towards the jetty.

As I was taking the commissar towards the end of

the jetty, he evidently thought that his fate was to be the same as that of his victims of a year ago and began struggling and suddenly somehow freed his mouth and shouted in German:

"Help! They're murdering me!"

As I clapped my hand over his mouth to stop the row, he cleverly freed his arms, grabbed me round the waist and pushed me against the railings with a force that one would never have suspected from his size.

He caught me so thoroughly unawares that I nearly went over the railing into the sea. Before I had thoroughly recovered my balance, he got a new hold on me and was pressing my head down over the railing, putting all his weight against my neck and chest. The moment was critical, as I had no support behind me and my feet were beginning to slip on the moist shiny stones of the jetty. Just as they were going, I made a supreme effort and fortunately caught one of them around the iron upright and, thus obtaining an anchorage, was able to let go with my hands from the top rail and grab him round the waist. Then I pressed him backwards with all my strength until finally I gained the advantage of him and threw him under me on the stones. Somehow, in his eel-like quickness, he rolled me over, jumped and started to run, but I just managed to catch him by the leg and bring him down again. This time I landed on him and put my knee into his abdomen and was preparing to tie him up again when one of my officers came hurrying up to tell me that a Ger-

man patrol under the command of two officers was approaching the jetty.

At this unexpected news I gave Yankel a stunning blow on the head, dragged him to a signal hut at the end of the jetty, pushed him in, locked the door and put the key in my pocket. This done, I went to meet the German patrol. One of the officers asked me:

"Was it you who forbade the 'Krim' to leave port?"

"Yes," I answered.

"And on what grounds, may I ask?" he continued.

"On the simple grounds that you requisitioned the launch for the use of the German Army during the occupation; and that, as you are now leaving, I do not consider it to be your right to take it away with you or to sell it to anybody."

"All right," he said. "Tonight we are leaving and we only want the 'Krim' to go as far as Aloushta (25 miles from Yalta) and I give you my word of honour as an officer that we shall send it back to Yalta immediately upon our arrival there."

"This means that you give me your word of honour as an officer of the Imperial German Army that you will immediately send the launch back from Aloushta?"

"Yes," he replied, "the word of honour of an officer of the Imperial German Army that you will have it back before tomorrow morning."

"Then you may take it," said I, and parted with the Germans.

After this short conversation I went back to see how my prisoner was faring. Great was my surprise

and disgust when I unlocked the door of the signal box and found it quite empty with the door on the opposite side broken open. When I came up to the officer doing sentry duty at the head of the jetty and asked him whether he had seen any one passing him or approaching the signal box, he answered that he had seen no one but that a small rowboat with several German soldiers had come up to the end of the jetty and rowed away again about five minutes later.

Then it was all quite clear to me. The whole thing had been put over on us by the Germans. While their patrol was purposely keeping me engaged on the jetty, some other soldiers had been sent to release the prisoner. They had evidently learned from the launch's crew of Yankel's arrest and later, hearing his shouts for help and knowing that there was no place to lock him up on the jetty but in the signal post they went and released him and took him with them.

Soon after midnight the engines of the "Krim" turned over and the craft began moving seaward. Once free of the port it developed full speed towards Aloushta, and shortly after disappeared in the dark.

Then I went to our billet and telephoned all our posts along the coast as far as Aloushta, warning them as follows:

"The motor schooner 'Krim' has just left Yalta for Aloushta with Germans, Turks and probably Commissar Yankel on board. From Aloushta the schooner is to return at once to Yalta. It is most essential to keep constantly in touch with it and, in

the event of its changing course, you are to report to me at once by telephone."

At 2 a.m. we were relieved and I went home. At ten the next morning I again inspected my port section, and found that of thirty-two officers comprising its actual strength, there were only six in possession of arms. I therefore at once determined to take them to the Commandant and obtain full equipment for them, namely rifles, revolvers and hand grenades.

On reporting the matter to the Colonel, I received his very unsatisfactory answer that I might have five rifles from the magazine. You who have seen the great dumps of ammunition, rifles, and equipment on the Western front who may happen to read these lines, can well imagine the disheartening effect of being expected to carry on with bare hands and will perhaps overlook the petulant decision and action I took under the impulse of this trying moment. I thanked the Colonel very much and left the room to join my officers, whom I addressed as follows:

"The Commandant has given authority to draw five rifles from the magazine. I therefore direct you five officers to receive these arms and release all the rest of you from further duty. You may all return home; I feel that I have no moral right to expose any of you to danger while you are unarmed."

The Colonel heard this little speech of mine from inside as I intended he should, and called to me through the open window:

"Hold your men for a moment and come here. I wish to speak to you."

When I appeared before him he asked me why I felt it necessary to dispense with my extra men.

"Because, Sir," I answered, "I cannot take the responsibility of exposing the lives of unarmed men to danger. Our post is one of the most important and active in the whole town. We shall constantly have to deal with schooners and steamers which enter the port bringing either armed Bolsheviks or contraband for them, which we shall have to seize and in doing so must expose ourselves to armed resistance or even open fighting. I organised the Port Section, obtained the arms from the Germans and now see them lying idle in your magazine instead of being issued to us for our most important protective work."

"Well," he asked, "what do you really require?"

"Rifles for everybody, that is thirty-five, as many revolvers as it is possible to obtain in good order and a few dozen hand grenades."

"Very well," he said, "I shall deliver this amount to you on your own responsibility and against your personal receipt."

Relieved at this result and after having drawn the arms which I considered necessary, I sent the detachment back to quarters and went home to dinner.

At four o'clock I returned to the section and started them cleaning the equipment and putting it into good shape. At about five o'clock the head of the frontier guard at Gourzouff, a little town half way between Yalta and Aloushta, telephoned me as follows:

"We can see the motor launch 'Krim' which left Aloushta this morning bound for Yalta. She has

just altered her course and turned sharp to the south heading evidently for the Turkish port of Samsoun on the Asiatic coast of the Black Sea."

On receipt of this message I at once got my detachment ready which took only a few minutes, and dispatched two officers to the headquarters of the Commandant with a note asking him to lend me two motor cars for an important and urgent undertaking. With the cars at my disposal in a quarter of an hour, I chose ten of my officers and started with them for Gourzouff.

There from the mountain road above the town, through my glasses I could see the motor launch far off and apparently out of control as she steamed ahead for a short distance and then stopped, repeating the manoeuvre several times.

My thought was to secure a motor boat at Gourzouff and give chase, but to our great disappointment there was not a single craft we could use. On the other hand we learned that a small steamer was due in Aloushta in about thirty minutes, on which I now pinned my hopes. This little steamer which was also called "Aloushta" was considered to be too small to go to sea but was running a coastwise service in good weather between Aloushta and Sebastopol.

When she came into port, I boarded her at once, apologised to the passengers for asking them to go ashore and overruled the captain's protests with the statement that the craft was required for military purposes and that his expenses would be refunded by the military authorities. To his question as to

where I wished him to go I answered that I should inform him just as soon as we were off shore.

In addition to my ten officers, I took with me from Gourzouff eight men of the Tekin tribe of Central Asia who had formerly served with the well-known Korniloff regiment in the early days of the Volunteer Army, which had previously saved General Korniloff from prison when he was Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army on the German front and again when he was arrested by the Kerensky Government after his attempt against Petrograd in August, 1917.

As soon as we were out of port, I went up on the bridge and looking at the compass, gave the Captain the course I wanted him to take as the launch was not in sight. It was already getting dark and windy so that the sea was becoming rather rough. The captain soon insisted on returning to port, protesting that his craft could not stand the rough sea and might easily sink.

"All right," I said, "when she is about to sink we shall turn back, but not before then."

In the meantime it became quite dark. Though the waves kept running higher, I decided to sail straight ahead for another hour without altering the course. My officers on the deck below were beginning to grouse, thinking that the launch had succeeded in giving us the slip, whereas I still remained hopeful for our final success and saw my patience rewarded in half the hour I had determined to continue.

Right there ahead of us the lights of the launch

suddenly appeared, gradually showing clearer. I ordered the captain to approach to within about thirty-five fathoms and then stop the engines. As we slowed, I fired my revolver which created a certain amount of excitement aboard the launch and brought two shots back from her.

I turned to ask the captain for his speaking trumpet but found to my astonishment that he was no longer on the bridge and when I shouted for him, I heard his answer from somewhere far below. Later my officers informed me that the moment the first shots were fired the captain jumped from the bridge to the deck and from there disappeared through a hatch into the engine room. So I had to find the speaking trumpet for myself and with it returned to the bridge where I shouted to the schooner:

"On board the 'Krim.' Anyone speaking Russian?"

"Yes!" came the answer, "I can speak Russian."

"Right!" said I again. "All of you come on board the 'Aloushta,' one at a time in your own boat which we shall take back."

The answer to my command was a rifle volley, which fortunately did not injure anybody. In turn I ordered my men to reply with a volley. As the eighteen rifles rang out almost as one, cries and the sound of spattering metal came from the schooner, followed almost immediately by a string of shots from a machine gun. From our deck I heard a cry and the thud of a falling body. To make an impression on the schooner's crew and to show them

that we did not intend to be trifled with, I discharged a hand grenade at a safe distance from them and then reiterated my demand. As soon as I made sure that they were preparing to launch one of their boats, I went below to see what had happened and found that one of my fellows, a youngster of about eighteen years, had been wounded. He was sitting on the deck holding his left shoulder and explained that it was nothing but a flesh wound.

"The bone has not been touched," he added cheerfully, "and I am determined to carry on!"

I hurried along to the captain's cabin where I found a small portable medicine case with which to dress his wound.

"But why did you fall?" I asked.

"This is the first time that I was ever wounded," he explained, "and, when I felt the pain in my shoulder, I thought I was killed; but the Tekins picked me up and said that I was still alive; so I cheered up and now am ready to fight again."

There was something very pathetic to us overhardened older officers in this answer of the young fellow who had never before been under fire. The expression of his eyes spoke for him and one could see that he was pleased and proud that now he was a proper officer and had at last been in action.

Meanwhile the small boat had left the schooner and was coming alongside. Their first man on board was a Turk with a face like a brigand. We disarmed him and sent him down to the hold under a guard of two officers.

Then I got into the boat, fastened the end of a line

round one of the thwarts and rowed to the launch. I did not expect to find any more resistance on the part of the crew after the readiness with which they complied with my orders following the throwing of the hand grenade. The moment I reached the launch I made the line fast and shouted back to have them take up slack.

As I was well armed with two hand grenades at my belt and a revolver in my hand, the Turks immediately obeyed when I ordered them to put their hands up. Once rid of the line I had wound around my free arm, I promptly searched them and ordered two of them down into the small boat to work their way along the hand line to the "Aloushta." With our ships rocking and the waves increasing, crossing and boarding were such difficult tasks that one of the Turks fell overboard as he was leaving the rowboat for the steamer. In a second one of my officers had thrown off his arms and dived, grasping the Turk with one hand and a rope that was thrown to him with the order, and thus succeeded in bringing the Turk back to the gangway in spite of the heavy swell. Then one of my officers pulled the boat back to the schooner where I had one more Turk left. I kept the officer with me and sent the Turk along to the steamer when another officer joined us.

Being now three, we began a detailed search of the schooner that revealed to us the lock of a Lewis gun. The Turks after firing the round from it, probably realised that they would be collared and dropped it overboard, forgetting the lock. After looking about everywhere without finding anything

else of importance, at last to my great astonishment and joy, as I opened the door of a small closet intended for keeping gasolene, I noticed a pair of legs sticking out from behind the barrels.

We pulled at the legs and gradually extracted a body. When we came to the head, we recognised our friend, Commissar Yankel, whom the Germans had filched from us. As he emerged he looked very troubled for he knew that he was the bird I was trying to get. I did not say a word to him except to order him down into the boat to go across to the steamer with one of my officers. With the other officer, I remained on the launch to see what could be done with the engine and was fortunate enough to get her going in about twenty minutes, so that I could cast off the line to the steamer. Then I yelled to the captain to steam full speed for Yalta and steered the launch myself. As we passed the steamer, the officers gave us a rousing cheer and wished us bon voyage to Yalta, the lights of which could be seen in the distance. With our motor turning full speed, I saw that we would quickly outdistance them and, not wishing to leave the small steamer behind in the rough sea, I slowed down considerably to keep in touch with her. Only when we were already in the gulf and nearing the harbour I let her out and reached our anchorage about twenty minutes ahead of the "Aloushta."

There was great excitement on the jetty. All the men of the Port Section as well as the Yalta military leaders were present and were anxiously awaiting our return as they had been informed that we had

gone in pursuit of the launch in a craft that was none too seaworthy.

When I came up to them on the jetty and announced to them our capture of the commissar, O.C.'s and men alike were almost crazy with delight at our having once more bagged this beast that had sent so many of their fellows to tug at their ropes in the harbour bottom.

When the "Aloushta" had anchored and the Tekins had been given a little financial reward for their share in this stunt, I left the Turks for the night in the Port Section billet and handed the commissar over to the Commandant of the town with the request that our chief lock him up in a safe place, as I did not now want to execute sentence upon him before he had been seen and questioned by our higher authorities. Then I hurried home as I was tired, hungry, and wet.

Early next morning a telephone message came from the Commandant's office saying that my prisoner had, incredible as it may seem, escaped. This information made me terribly angry, and I was disgusted and annoyed at the carelessness of the people in charge of the Commandant's office in matters of such importance. I at once went to the Port Section and said:

"Yankel has escaped again. All the men of the Port Section except five who are on duty must at once go in pursuit of him and if he is not caught in three days, I shall throw up the game here and leave Yalta for the front, as I'm fed up with this sort of thing."

Later on I was again called to the 'phone and informed that the Germans had that day evacuated and had taken away with them nine lorries loaded with various valuable articles from the Imperial Palace at Livadia and asked if I could not take the necessary steps to hold them up. As we could not pursue the Germans on foot, I rang up the Commandant of Simferopol and warned him of what had happened. A few days later I was informed that the motor lorries had been held up and that the Imperial property recovered had been sent back to Livadia.

The Germans had at last gone and Yalta breathed a sigh of relief.

CHAPTER XXIII

A BIT OF THE BRITISH NAVY

DURING the German occupation, the ports of the Crimea were frequently visited by various types of ships flying all sorts of flags, such as the Ukrainian national emblem and the red flag of Bolshevism, as well as those of Asia Minor and the Mediterranean. As the Crimea was now occupied by a loyal Russian Volunteer Army, I held that Russian ships could fly the proper Russian tricolour only and suggested that no Russian ship should be allowed to come into port without that flag. This suggestion was accepted by the Commandant and a signal was placed at the end of the jetty which stopped all ships at the entry of the port. Officers of the Port Section then boarded them for inspection and each captain was warned that he must fly a Russian national flag if he wanted to enter the port. All captains complied with this without any protest except the skipper of a vessel carrying Bolshevik colours who refused point blank to conform and promised to return shortly and avenge himself on the town of Yalta for not allowing his ship to enter the port. It was also one of our duties to arrest all suspicious characters found on board incoming vessels.

Finding that the Port Section was not sufficiently

equipped in arms for all this work and also that I could not succeed in obtaining more arms myself in Yalta, I asked leave from the Commandant to go for three days to Sebastopol on private business, while my real object was to try to obtain at least two machine-guns from the Allied authorities there.

On my arrival I proceeded directly to the British Naval Headquarters and called upon the Naval Base Commandant to ask him to help me in the matter. He was very sympathetic in his appreciation of our straights and issued me an indent for two Maxim machine-guns with twenty thousand rounds of ammunition. I secured the weapons and was back that same day in Yalta and handed over the machine guns to the Port Section to the great delight of all the officers.

The next morning I received a gratifying message that Commissar Yankel had again been arrested and was now under guard at the Port Section awaiting my orders. This time I decided that I would not entrust him to anybody but would keep him under close arrest myself. In answer to my interested inquiry as to how he had been arrested, they informed me that early in the morning at daybreak, as our patrols were passing through one of the quieter streets of the town, they suddenly heard cries for help. Surrounding the house from which the cries came, two of the officers hurried inside to find a woman stretched on the floor with blood streaming from her head and a man on his knees in the corner ransacking a trunk. In collaring the robber they had the un-

expected joy of discovering it was none other than Yankel.

At the investigation of the case it was discovered that Yankel wanted to leave Yalta but, not having sufficient means to do so, he had attempted to secure them by robbery. When the woman began calling for help, he had evidently knocked her down with a pistol. This new fact alone was sufficient to decide his fate, so I made up my mind to take him at once to the Commandant where some few formalities concerning him had to be gone through with.

But these plans did not carry quite true. I was walking behind the escort watching Yankel's every movement expecting that he might try to bolt. Sure enough, when we were passing a narrow way between two wooden fences, one of them a fairly low one, Yankel suddenly jumped to one side, knocked down one of the escort and made an effort to clear the fence. Two bullets from my revolver finally closed this chase with its repeated arrests and escapes and the career of this man who had destroyed so many of our fellow officers. I left a sentry by the body and went back to the billet where I wrote a report on what had happened and forwarded it to the Commandant of the town.

In the afternoon I busied myself organising a special detachment for duty afloat on the "Krim" and supplying it with arms and ammunition. This detachment was to consist of two mechanics and six men for crew. By way of armament I placed one machine-gun forward and one aft and thus had the nucleus of a navy to assist in quelling any disturbance

that might occur anywhere along the extended water front of the town.

In the evening a telegram was received at Yalta Headquarters stating that on the following day a military transport would arrive from Novorossisk bringing to Yalta a special detachment of former officers of the Imperial Guard regiments to act as guard for the Imperial residence at Livadia, where the Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna and several Grand Dukes were then living. All the local authorities and a large gathering of citizens met the transport at the jetty. The detachment disembarked and marched through the whole town to the Imperial estate where they were quartered in one of the buildings of the royal suite. All the officers and men were in good condition and looked exceedingly fit, something which we had not seen in our semi-guerilla warfare for a long time.

Just a few days later I was notified by one of the officers of the Port Section that a foreign destroyer had been sighted steaming directly for Yalta. Though it was at first too far away to be able to distinguish its nationality, I soon discovered it was British. In a few moments the "Senator" came into port and moored alongside the jetty.

After dispatching a messenger to inform Headquarters, I returned at once to the destroyer where I found that the British officers were in difficulties trying to explain something to some of my men who did not know a word of English. When I came up and asked in English whether I could do anything for them, they told me that I could be of great

assistance to them, if I would, in helping them to carry out the purpose of their coming. They explained that their orders were to visit a few ports in the Crimea to learn the exact political situation for a report to the Admiral in Constantinople. The Captain at the same time asked me whether I would be willing to proceed with the destroyer to Theodosia, a port situated about sixty-five miles east of Yalta. I answered that I would go with pleasure if my Officer in Command would allow me.

Shortly afterward the Commander of the Yalta Garrison and the Commandant of the town arrived to pay an official visit to the Captain, who asked me to join them on board to act as interpreter for them.

The Captain inquired minutely about the general political situation in Yalta and about the forces which the garrison had at its disposal in the event of a Bolshevik rising, ending with the request that I be allowed to go with them to Theodosia, to which my Chief at once consented. It was only a little while before the Captain and the first Lieutenant returned the visit to the Chief of the Garrison at his Headquarters and again asked me to accompany them.

As soon as we returned to the destroyer I went home to collect a few things for the night and to apprise my wife of my new and interesting detail. At 4 p.m. the destroyer put to sea and steamed for Theodosia where she anchored at dusk.

Rumour had it that in Theodosia the number of the local Bolsheviks was several times as great as the number of loyal officers. The impression created by the arrival of the ship on the population was most

definite as this was the first Allied warship that had cruised the Black Sea since the very beginning of the war. The jetty and the quay were black with spectators and, as the destroyer made fast to the jetty, a crowd of stevedores collected and showed signs of animosity and hatred for the British. Shortly after our arrival I was informed by the Quartermaster that a Russian officer on the jetty near the gangway was inquiring about something but that he could not understand him at all. I went at once on deck and found that the officer referred to was a Russian General and the Garrison Commander of the town of Theodosia. When I reported this fact to the Captain, he at once invited him to come on board. In answer to the questions of the Captain the General gave a tragic description of the hopeless situation in Theodosia.

"Every day," he said, "they are sniping officers. Burglaries and murders are constantly increasing in number and I have no means of combating the evil."

He begged the Captain to request his Admiral to keep a British destroyer stationed at Theodosia, thus to help effectively to check the ever increasing activities of the Bolsheviks in the town.

"This is the exact object for which I am now visiting all the Crimean ports to find out the true political situation of each of them, for it is proposed so to keep one destroyer in every port which seems threatened by the local extremists," the Captain answered and thus greatly reassured the old General who had more than ample reason for his nervousness.

Just after the Garrison Commander had taken

leave of the Captain and gone ashore, some of the British sailors on deck asked me, pointing to the wretched looking crowd of stevedores on the jetty:

"Are those Bolsheviks, Sir?"

"I presume they are. In any case they look like it. Can't you see the hatred with which they stare at you British?"

When I thus answered them, one of them nipped down below and came up with a concertina on which he at once began playing the Russian National anthem, the *"Boje Tzaria Khrani,"* "God Save the Tsar." The effect was like magic on the workmen, who scattered as though a machine gun had been turned on them, spitting on the ground and swearing for all they were worth as they went.

Just a little while afterwards the Captain and first Lieutenant went to return the visit of the Garrison Commander. It seemed quaint to me, this exchange of visits after a lapse of less than an hour. After about half an hour with the General, we got up to go, but were stopped by the old man with the exclamation:

"For God's sake don't attempt to return on foot, it is too dangerous in the evening and I should never forgive myself if anything happened to foreign officers in a town under my command." So we had to wait for the *izvostchik* to be called and safely returned to the ship.

Early next morning we put to sea on our way back to Yalta. As we approached the harbour I noticed that our navy had come out to meet the visiting fleet and so, to save the time of going into port to land

me, I took leave of the officers and went on board the "Krim," and was at home again by dinner time.

It was just shortly after this Theodosia trip that I was summoned to Headquarters and told to prepare to proceed the next day to Ekaterinodar to carry official papers to the General Headquarters of the Volunteer Army. I transferred the command of the Port Section to my first assistant and, starting off the next morning, arrived in Ekaterinodar in three days.

After delivering the despatches I was preparing to start at once on the return journey to Yalta and was dining at the officers' mess when suddenly I caught sight at another table of my brother whom I had not seen for over two years. I had not known whether he was alive or not. It appears that he had spent all that time in the northern Caucasus which for more than a year had been occupied by the Bolsheviks and dominated by the Red régime and terror. I tried to persuade him to return at once with me to Yalta but, finding that he had to close some affairs at Ekaterinodar, postponed my departure. We started off the next day and arrived in Novorossisk only to find that there was not a single berth in the Crimea boat, so that we had to pass the night at Novorossisk and sail on a large military transport leaving for Yalta on the following evening.

For those of you who may not have happened to live through a French Revolution or a Bolshevik Terror it is difficult for me to do more than indicate the pleasure and joy of finding one of the eight brothers and sisters of whose whereabouts and existence I had no certain knowledge. You can

imagine better than I can tell you what my wife's pleasure was when I brought him home that day.

With the first greetings over, my wife told me what had happened the night after I left.

"Hearing a noise outside, I listened," she said, "and distinctly heard someone walking to and fro in the garden. Carefully opening the widow, I made out two officers pacing up and down in the moonlight with rifles on their shoulders as though they were waiting for something to happen. I dressed, went out on the balcony and said:

" 'Who are you and what are you doing here?'

" 'Don't worry,' came the answer, 'we are officers of the Port Section and, knowing that things are not entirely quiet round here, have come to keep watch while your husband is away, so that you may sleep safely and without fear.'

"In spite of all my protestations that I was not in the least nervous or afraid, they refused absolutely to leave the garden and have kept two of your officers out there every night since then."

This more than courteous behaviour of the officers of my Section toward my family while I was away profoundly touched me and I went immediately down to thank them sincerely for it.

Just as a Commanding Officer always "feels it his duty" to report to Headquarters and refer to the exceptional acts of bravery on the part of his officers and men, so I feel it incumbent upon me to give to the outer world some pictures of the entirely unique conditions as well as of the loyalty of my unusual command and their readiness to attempt anything.

At that time the number of men in it amounted to over forty. The discipline among them was very severe and, although I could rely upon those men as upon myself, I could never be sure that they would not do something foolhardy and aggravating, perhaps nothing that might be detrimental to the general situation but something that might upset the quiet of the Yalta population. For instance, if I received orders to search a house or disperse a Bolshevik meeting and sent along word to the Port Section to despatch a few men for that purpose, the whole of the Section galloped to my house along the quay, which was Yalta's main street, and immediately stirred up the public to believe that the Bolsheviks were again up to something, "as the Port Section never starts out in vain." When they thus appeared at my house, they always formed up in company front and waited for me to come down.

One day the men asked my permission to organise a duck hunt, as the birds at that time of the year settled in great flocks on the sea just outside the jetty. Not seeing anything against it I gave my permission. To my great surprise the next morning at about eleven o'clock, while the town was enveloped in a dense fog, I heard a sharp rattle of rifle fire and hurried towards the jetty, from which direction the noise was coming. Along the quay the public were so frightened that they ran in all directions and soon left the streets empty. In the billet of the Port Section there was no one save the men on duty.

"What's all that row about?" I questioned.

"Duck shooting, Sir!" was the imperturbable

answer of the sentry. Then I ordered the bugler to call in all the men of the Section and went myself to the end of the jetty.

At first I could see nothing on account of the fog, but in a few minutes I picked up the sound of Russian songs being sung in chorus and watched three boats with twenty-seven of my men in them gradually emerge from the banks of mist. When they landed I severely upbraided them and reminded them again that they must not waste ammunition in the first place and secondly that they must avoid frightening the townspeople.

After this incident I forbade duck shooting and only authorised fishing, for which I even managed to buy some nets for the men.

This, however, also did not pass without trouble. One night I was awakened by a perfect fusillade and had to get up and make for the port, as I was sure that the noise came from there and that my men were again up to something wild. When I arrived I saw all my men standing in a line on the jetty at a distance of about two yards from one another firing shot after shot into the water. I was crazy and ordered them to stop firing at once.

"I wish you would cease being so childish. Have I not told you before that ammunition is not to be wasted in this foolish manner and that you are not to create a panic with your boyish tricks? Why were you firing?"

The answer and the reason were conspicuous as a rowboat approached from behind the jetty laden full with fish and my senior came up out of it, saying:

"This is the result of our firing, Sir! We could not resist the temptation when the sentry woke us up and informed us there was a big school of *loban* (a very scarce and delectable fish) just off the jetty; so we fired to get as many as we could."

At this answer my anger cooled down and I felt more like laughing but had to suppress this desire to show that I was still very much annoyed at them. I sent the men to bed and went home myself, reflecting over their trying life.

In my heart I sympathised deeply with the moral problems of the men. They had suffered so much at the hands of the Bolsheviks that they craved some distraction from their daily routine. Their minds were inevitably depressed by the hatred they nourished towards the Bolsheviks and especially toward the Jews as practically all the Commissars were Jews. There was not an officer of the Section who had not suffered intensely at the hands of these scoundrels: one had his father shot, another his brother, a third his mother or sister imprisoned, a fourth had all his property confiscated or destroyed and was now reduced to poverty, and this at a time when they were themselves bravely exposing their lives to death trying to keep the Russian Army from falling to pieces under the influence of the German and Jewish propaganda. Despair was rife in their hearts and expressed itself in every imaginable way. Often in the evening I used to go down and talk with them in their billet and they would sometimes ask permission to sing a song. Naturally I always encouraged them, being myself very fond of Russian

choral singing. And when these forty men, among whom there were some splendid voices replete with pathos and sadness, sang our Russian melodies, it was all I could do to keep the tears from my eyes. It is a fact that has been oft recognised that a Russian, in a simple folk song, can express the anguish and tragedy accumulated in his soul with more poignancy than almost any other man.

I was deeply attached to those men who had endured and suffered so much and had been so good to me and my family. It is true that among them were some rough and not so well educated people and that at times I had to be hard on them, but I always had the satisfaction of knowing that a word from me would make them do anything that the situation might demand.

In our strange conditions of warfare with our backs to the Black Sea and all Red Russia pressing the small areas we still held from the north, our scattered forces had no Quartermaster General or Pay Department so that there were no funds for the equipment and rations of our section nor had the members the means themselves for their own support. Consequently my wife undertook to provide the necessary funds by organising concerts and entertainments, whose proceeds enabled them to feed themselves and their families.

Bereft of all their accustomed servants and organisation they were almost like children with no one to look after them, so that my wife had to raise funds and provide them with beds, linen, and everything else necessary and even had frequently to visit the

quarters in order to see that things were kept clean and in good order, and to learn what was lacking.

One morning as I came down to the billet I found everything upside down and all the men busy with a general housecleaning. The floors were being swept, linen washed, furniture beaten, a process so unusual that I naturally inquired what had happened. The explanation was that my wife had 'phoned that she would come and inspect the premises. I smiled at the idea, but recommended them that they furbish up daily instead of only on the occasion of my wife's visit. To this they answered that they could not be bothered every day with feminine jobs, but that they were always glad to go through with them whenever my wife wanted to come.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE WHITE PAPAKHA

IN Yalta there is a quarter of the town called "Shelome" in which the lowest elements of the population, such as murderers, burglars, drunkards and the like, foregather.

Through one of the officers who knew the town exceedingly well I learned that a Bolshevik meeting was to be held in that section. I told my men that I would be at a certain spot in the quarter at exactly ten o'clock and that twenty of them should station themselves in the neighbourhood as secretly as possible and be ready to join me the moment I whistled.

When I arrived at the designated place, I saw on the other side of the street a house with the top story brightly lighted and with the shadows of several people silhouetted on the drawn curtains. When I blew a long, low note on my whistle, in a few seconds I was surrounded by a crowd of evil looking hooligans. I was frankly frightened and started to draw my revolver but was stopped by a hand laid upon mine, and by a well-known voice saying:

"Don't you recognise us, Sir?"

Only then it dawned on me that these ruffians were my own men of the Port Section who had thus disguised themselves in order not to attract attention in

this low quarter. We occupied various vantage points on both sides of the street and waited for the Bolshevik meeting to adjourn, which did not happen for another two hours. Under orders from Novorossisk we had to arrest two men from this group, so we very carefully studied the faces and at last recognised the ones we wanted. After seizing them we locked them up in the premises of the Port Section till the next morning when I sent them by steamer to General B—— at Novorossisk.

In the meantime the activity of the Yalta Bolsheviks were becoming more and more threatening. In some places posters appeared calling the workmen to murder officers and the bourgeoisie. The street meetings were increasing, and nearly every day brought news of the sad tragedy of an officer shot down by a sniper. To check these growing disorders the patrolling of the streets by Government troops was enforced and a command was issued that those caught in the act of burglary or murder should be shot on the spot, if they resisted arrest.

One night as my wife and I were returning home through the dark streets, we suddenly heard several shots fired at us and the sound of spattering bullets over our heads. I pushed my wife into the gate of a garden we were passing and let go a few revolver shots at the group near the end of the street, but without any result. Having taken my wife home, I stalked the spot with my rifle but could not find anyone.

The next day I was summoned by the Chief of the Garrison and given the following instructions:

"I have received an order from General Headquarters of the Volunteer Army to equip one company of officers from Yalta and dispatch it to the front. For this purpose we shall have need of motor cars. Will you please at once proceed to make a general list of private cars and requisition them for one week for Army use. After you have done this, you will have to go to Sebastopol and apply to the Allied Headquarters for machine guns and ammunition for this company."

As I went along home, I was fearful of an attack, for the sniping of officers was still going on; so I opened my revolver case and closed my hand over the grip. In one of the dark places and lonely streets I had to travel I was suddenly stopped by a fellow who, seeing my lighted cigarette, said:

"Will you give me a light, *Tovaristch?*" and he moved his face forward with a cigarette in his mouth.

"Well!" I thought, "this is the first time I have been called *Tovaristch* in the territory of the Volunteer Army!"

Drawing my revolver I stuck my cigarette in the muzzle and, in the dark, lifted the revolver with the cigarette to his face. Seeing only the light, he started to take the cigarette from my hand, but instead felt the cold barrel of the revolver. He sprang back and ran like a scared deer round the corner, while I had a good laugh over my *Tovaristch* friend.

Of course, I could not know what the intentions of the fellow were, but I based my precaution on the knowledge of two recent cases where officers had been stopped in the street by some one asking for a light

and had been stabbed with a knife as they raised their hands with the cigarette.

The next morning with the assistance of the officers of the Port Section, I made a complete list of the private cars in Yalta and notified their owners that for the week the cars were to be held subject to military service and were not to leave the town.

Then the following morning, accompanied by one of my officers, I sailed for Sebastopol and immediately after arrival went on board the British flagship, H. M. S. "Temeraire," and lay before the Admiral the object of my visit.

The Admiral was most sympathetic and helpful and requested me to come and see him again the next day to receive the official indents for six machine guns and 200,000 rounds of ammunition for the officers' Volunteer Company of Yalta. This was of course satisfactory and quite beyond my expectations.

In the evening we went to dine in a restaurant and, as we were walking back towards our hotel, a man suddenly emerged from a small restaurant in the basement of a house carrying a long leather case in his hand. At first I took no notice of him but in a few minutes I felt somebody pulling me by the sleeve. I turned round and saw it was the same man who appeared to be considerably drunk and addressed me as follows:

"Please tell me, Sir, are you of the Volunteer Army?"

"Yes," said I, laying my hand on the butt of my revolver, "I am."

"Then please allow me to play you a tune on my

instrument," said he producing a trombone from the case. "I love the Volunteer Army people, they are such a nice lot!" and he made an attempt to produce a tune on the instrument with lips which he could not very well control.

"Look here," said I, laying one hand on his shoulder and pulling the instrument away from his mouth with the other, "if you really love the Volunteer Army as you say you do, you must stop making that noise or you will get me into trouble. You must know that the town is under martial law and no noise, be it even your music, is allowed in the streets at night."

He at once put his instrument away in the case and added gravely:

"If I can't play just now, I shall all the same find you somewhere in the day time and will then play my little tune for you!"

I thanked him very much and we went our own way.

The next morning I again visited the Admiral and received from him all the necessary papers and indents to obtain the required arms and, with his blessing and warmest good wishes, proceeded to the arsenal to draw the machine guns. Then I applied to the Russian Commandant of the fortress for a pass to transport the arms and ammunition from Sebastopol to Yalta, leaving the weapons in charge of the Arsenal guard.

"Have you drawn your ammunition yet?" the General asked.

"No, Your Excellency, not yet."

"And how many are you?" he continued.

"We are two officers."

"Then I advise you not to attempt to move such a quantity of ammunition, as the Laboratory Valley, where the depot is situated, is six miles away from the town and surrounded by the quarters of the Sebastopol stevedores who are all proper Bolsheviks. And I warn you that, if they do spare your lives, they certainly will not allow you to take away the ammunition. Don't forget that to convey 200,000 rounds of ammunition you will have to use at least ten limbers, and you naturally cannot do it unnoticed."

Not wishing to lose either the Government property or my life, I made up my mind not to attempt to transfer the guns and ammunition to Yalta, but to leave them where they were and return immediately with the papers, a procedure that was also justified by the fact that the Yalta Company would have to pass through Sebastopol on its way to the front and could pick up the supplies then. This would likewise save carting it back and forth.

Then when we found we could not leave for Yalta the following morning, we decided to use the remainder of the day in looking about the town which I had never seen before and which, since the Crimean War of 1854-1856, had been the most noteworthy historical spot of South Russia.

We went first of all to the famous "Malakhoff Kourgan," one of the forts which had been so gallantly defended by the Russians against the terrific assaults of the Allied Armies during their eleven

months' siege of the town. One can still see the section which was used as a shelter by Admiral Nakhimoff and, after his death, by General Kornil-off, the two heroes of the defence. The watchman who looks after the place is an old man of about ninety years who at the age of twenty actually took part in those battles he describes and was twice wounded on the walls of the very fort where he now acts as guide. He took us all around and showed us everything worth seeing, talking about the events of 1854-1856 as if they had taken place only a few days ago. Finally he led us into a round building situated on the highest point of the hillock containing the enormous panoramic view of the assault of Sebastopol. The panorama is circular and covers some 250 feet in length by 30 in height. The various incidents of the assault are so faithfully reproduced that it gives an impression of absolute reality. One can see the French infantry in their red trousers going to the attack, and the red-coated British hussars on their magnificent white mounts, while in the distance the artist has reproduced the famous "Charge of the Light Brigade." The reproduction is so clever that it is almost impossible to distinguish where the actual stones, earth, ruins of fortifications and the like, end and the painting begins.

When we arrived in Yalta the following day, the Volunteer Company was already prepared to start within twenty-four hours. On receiving my report at Headquarters, the Commander ordered me to accompany the troops to Sebastopol and personally

to deliver to them the arms and ammunition which had been obtained from the British.

The departure was fixed for the next day at 10 a.m. At nine the company was drawn up in line on the jetty in the presence of military and civil authorities and the clergy. After a short divine service, they embarked on a military transport to the strains of martial music and the cheers of the crowds assembled to bid farewell to this fated unit. As the boat weighed anchor, the men with bowed heads made the sign of the cross and then gave a great "Hurrah" as they drew out of the harbour, little dreaming what would be the end of all their sacrifice and effort.

Two months later this company was surrounded by a regiment of Red cavalry and wiped out to the last man. Captain Gattenberger, the officer commanding, well-known for his gallantry throughout the German War, was among the last to fall. Being severely wounded and seeing his hopeless position, having only five men at his side, he caught hold of the company's colours, tore them from the staff and destroyed them. Seeing the Red guards approaching him with the evident purpose of making him prisoner, he shouted to them:

"Your hands are not worthy of touching a Russian officer while he is alive! Neither is it for a Jewish commander to make a prisoner of a Russian officer!"

At these words he, and his five companions, as though by command of their senior, put their revolver muzzles to their heads and fired. Of the

270 officers which constituted the company not one was captured by the murderers of their land.

We had these details of the tragedy from an officer of another unit who was lying wounded close by and witnessed the last minutes of these heroes. When he saw their act, he fainted and only recovered consciousness the next day when he was picked up by the White Army after it had regained this ground.

In Sebastopol the company marched through the town from the harbour to the railway station. The O. C. gave me twenty-eight men, of whom I sent ten to the British guard at the Arsenal with a note asking to turn over the machine guns which I had left with them, while twenty came along with me to escort the ten limbers of ammunition. Having loaded the limbers we started for the railway station, but we had only gone a couple of miles when our troubles began. We were fired upon from all sides and twice part of my men had to attack the Bolsheviks in their ambush among some old ruins. Fortunately our casualties were only one man wounded and we at last succeeded in bringing our cases safely to the station.

The train was only leaving for the north the next day so we had to sleep the night in the trucks. The station was guarded by a British platoon under the command of a British captain, with whom I had many long talks. He told me that their duties were very turbulent, and that they were frequently summoned off to various places along the line, as the Bolshevik bands were prowling about all the time, trying to cause disturbance or hinder the traffic by destroying the line or laying bombs to blow up pass-

ing troop or ammunition trains and to prevent the normal transport of material to the front. While I was thus conversing with the British captain an officer of the Russian company knocked and announced:

"There is a strange looking man wandering about the platform. By the tattoo marks on his hands it looks as though he were a sailor, and he certainly looks like a Bolshevik. He is handing out printed propaganda sheets of a Bolshevik nature. I reported the case to the commander of our company and he directed me to refer the matter to you!"

"If he is still in the station arrest him at once and bring him here," I directed.

In a few minutes an escort brought in an evil looking individual with a face like a brigand. When I explained to the British Commandant of the station about the matter, he asked me to translate the proclamation to him. While I was thus engaged the Britisher was holding his revolver ready to fire, and imperturbably tapping the Bolshevik on the head from time to time with the muzzle. When I had finished translating I asked the officer how he proposed to deal with the fellow.

"What do you suggest?" he asked.

But just at that moment the door burst open and a British non-com reported:

"Sir, a party of British officers who were returning from Sebastopol to the ammunition depot in a motor car are surrounded by a crowd of Bolsheviks just outside the town."

The Commandant bolted with his men to go to the

spot and, as he was leaving the room, called to me:

"Please dispose of this man as you see fit while I go to see what's the trouble!"

As soon as the British officer was out of sight our prisoner began cursing and threatening us. When I came up to him and advised him to keep quiet, he tore off my St. George Cross, threw it on the floor, spat on it and began using such obscene language about St. George that I felt there was only one thing to be done with him.

I ordered two officers to take him out of the station and lead him toward the harbour while I myself followed on. The man continued his obscene language, now against everything and everybody, not even sparing God and the saints. I stood it as long as anyone could be expected to but in the end it became too much for me, so I stopped the escort and said to the rascal:

"Look here! from your speech and behaviour I gather that you are not a man but the lowest form of beast and that you have no respect for anything sacred, not even for God Himself."

This he answered with such a torrent of revolting blasphemy that with my revolver I put an end to his polluted stream of words for all time.

After this incident we returned to the station and I went to bed with a horrible feeling still thinking of that debased creature who had lost every aspect of a human being. I had a top berth just over the company's O. C., and putting my big white *papakha* under my head for a pillow, I finally went off to sleep.

In the middle of the night we were awakened by the voices of several persons demanding to be taken to the company commander. As they were brought in, I saw five men in mufti and leaned over the edge of my bunk to see what was going on.

"Have you among your officers one wearing a big white *papakha*?"

"No, I haven't! Why?"

"An officer wearing one has this evening committed a murder. We have come to investigate the case in the name of the Crimea Government, and to arrest the officer who committed the crime," one stranger explained.

Fortunately the poor light and the position of my head kept my pillow from being identified; but, nevertheless, I edged back into my bunk and slipped the object of their search under my coat near the wall and rolled over to hear the rest of the conversation.

"No," said the O.C., "I have no such officer in my company and even if I had, I would not give him up to you, as the Volunteer Army does not come under the jurisdiction of the Crimean Government which has assumed power of its own accord and is not recognised by anybody. So good-bye and clear out and for Heaven's sake leave me alone and let me sleep."

Having failed in their object, the investigating authorities withdrew and left us to continue our sleep after the O.C. had looked up and said:

"That was a narrow squeak for you!"

This Government of the Crimea consisted of members of the Social-Revolutionary Party and of Jews.

The supreme command of the Volunteer or White Army which held control over both the civil and military power in South Russia, including the Crimea, was too much engrossed with more serious questions at the front to be able to spend any time over such matters as this self-formed Crimea Government, although it was constantly making all the trouble it could for them in their rear.

After the train with the Volunteer Company had left for the front, I looked about at once for some way to return to Yalta. As there was no boat leaving for two days I thought I would try to get one of the army motor cars frequently running between Yalta and Sebastopol to give me a lift.

Walking past a hotel near the harbour where the local military authorities were quartered, I noticed the Chief of Staff to the Commander-in-Chief of the Black Sea area of the Volunteer Army speaking to another officer.

"What!" they both ejaculated, "you, walking openly in the streets of Sebastopol? Don't you know that, after what happened last night, they are hunting for you all over the place and that the sailor Bolsheviks have sworn to do away with you at their first opportunity? Take my motor car at once and get back to Yalta as soon as you can to your Port Section, otherwise there will be trouble."

I jumped in the motor car and drove away leaving the Government and the sailors to search for me and my white *papakha,* which I was sitting on this time.

CHAPTER XXV

THE LAST DAYS OF ACTIVE RESISTANCE

AT home I found a telegram from one of my old friends in Ekaterinodar who had been recently given command of a regiment and who offered me in his telegram the post of his second in command.

Having first asked my wife's opinion and received her approval of this new move, I left Yalta for Novorossisk by the next boat.

When we started, the sea was as calm as a mill pond; but in the night a strong north-easter began blowing to give us a taste of this "worst weather" in the Black Sea. Following its well established habits, it soon developed into a howling gale and the thermometer dropped to below ten degrees. The deck was soon coated with ice and everything detachable swept overboard. It did not help our spirits early in the morning when we intercepted a wireless message stating that our steamer had perished through striking a floating mine somewhere off Novorossisk!

As a matter of fact we did nearly perish off this port, for we made five unsuccessful attempts to enter the harbour against the strong head wind that kept us travelling only perpendicularly in spite of the best efforts of our engines. The Captain then decided to go along the coast to a deep natural harbour about

five miles away where we would be sheltered from the wind. When we arrived there, the Captain anchored for the night in expectation of better weather in the morning, but in two hours the wind began blowing with such fury that both anchors carried away and we were again swept out to sea. For two days running we were so buffeted and tossed by the storm that most of the passengers thought we had come to the end of our days and spent most of their time in prayer. However, on the third day the wind dropped and allowed us to make the port of Novorossisk.

It was fortunate that I at once got off a telegram to my wife, saying that we were safely ashore, in view of the fact that half an hour after she received it my second in command of the Port Section informed her that a wireless message had come in saying the "St. Nicholas"—our steamer—had gone down with all on board. In answer to this my wife was happily able to read him my later telegram.

It was Christmas Day when I arrived in Ekaterinodar.

The new appointment of a second in command of a cavalry regiment formed of the mountaineer tribes of the Caucasus appealed to me strongly. From childhood I had been brought up by just such mountaineers who had taught me to ride and I always feel most grateful for it as the equestrian ability of these men is marvellous.

It was such riding as this among the Cossacks that brought forth a striking comment from a German officer made prisoner during the war:

"One of the things which we cannot withstand is the charge of a Cossack regiment!"

On a man who had never seen one, such an attack must, in fact, have made a nerve-racking impression. Imagine a *sotnia* of Cossacks tearing at full speed straight at the enemy. The enemy opens fire, but in thirty seconds the *sotnia* completely disappears and, from the point where it was last seen, there comes the rain of fire and a hundred rifles. The Cossack horses are trained to drop and lie prone at a second's notice, so that their riders can take shelter and fire from behind them.

There was another form of attack which, in the opening days of the war, used to harass and scatter the Germans. A Cossack regiment would charge the Germans at full speed when they could catch them in the open and compel them to meet it with bayonets. Suddenly instead of Cossacks with drawn swords the Germans would see before them only wildly galloping horses with no one in the saddles. To avoid casualties from the heavy machine gun and rifle fire, the Cossacks swung under the horses' bodies and, at the last minute, reappeared in the saddles.

"This," said the German officer, "our men could not stand and ran for their lives."

With thoughts of going back among such soldiers, I arrived in Ekaterinodar to assume my new duties. When I came to the officers' mess and asked for my new chief, I was shocked beyond words by the answer that he had died just the previous day. This news filled me with gloom and despair. Although I had been discharged from all active military service be-

cause of the wounds received during the war, it was nevertheless with the greatest pleasure that I had answered this call of my friend to join his regiment; but his untimely death had such a depressing effect upon me when I was suffering from the exposure and illness of the storm at sea that the wound in my perforated lung recrudesced and I began spitting blood. In that condition I could, of course, not think of proceeding to the front and, having sent a wire to the widow in Yalta informing her of the death of her husband, I made arrangements to return home and take the body of my friend with me to be buried there. Once back from this tragic journey and reinstated in my old post, I resumed again the work of seeking to protect the port as much as we could by searching incoming vessels for contraband and undesirable characters.

During one of these searches I came across a Jewess who was trying to avoid having her things examined. When I insisted on her opening her travelling bags I saw that the top layer of one of them consisted exclusively of orthodox ikons. She explained that she was taking the ikons for distribution among the officers and men of the Volunteer Army at the front. It was so evidently fishy for a Jewess to be carrying such a quantity of orthodox ikons that I went into the bag and under the ikons found hundreds of printed leaflets of Bolshevik propaganda, and then I understood what she wished to deliver to the army.

I had her at once taken off the boat and sent to the Port Section for detention until my return. Having

released the ship, I went to investigate the Jewess' case and found from the indications in her documents that she was very likely a relative of Trotzky. Probably the expression of our faces did not promise much for her, because she began pleading for release and explained that the propaganda sheets were placed in her bag without her knowledge as, she said, she hadn't the foggiest notion of their presence there. The evasion was too evident and Madame Bronstein was sent by the very next boat to Norovossisk to be handed over to the local Commandant who would know how to deal with her case.

In the meantime rumours spread in Yalta that the local Bolsheviks were intending to inaugurate the New Year by an organised massacre of officers. I desired to forestall any such attempt and warn the Bolshevik organisations that the Port Section was ready for action at any hour of day and night and so, at about one a.m., I had all the officers and men of my detachment embark in row boats and on the famous "Krim" and proceed to a point about twenty-five fathoms the other side of the jetty. There we opened a systematic machine-gun and rifle fire at short intervals and kept it up until daybreak. This created the desired impression on the Yalta population and especially upon the Bolsheviks, who thought that something had already been started by some one else, so that they dared not take the risk of putting their own plans into execution. In the morning I was summoned to Headquarters and reprimanded for the actual noise, but was thanked on the other hand for the quiet way in which the night had passed.

CHAPTER XXVI

CLEARING THE DECKS

ABOUT this time the disturbing news came that there were not sufficient forces at the front to hold back longer the pressure of the Red Army, and that the Crimea would possibly have to be abandoned until such time as it might be deemed wise to withdraw part of the forces from the Kharkoff front for the reoccupation of the Crimea.

As was inevitable, this news created a certain amount of panic among the people of the place and the comments on the situation became grossly exaggerated by those who did not know the exact position of our armies and who would not admit anything between a victory and a complete defeat. One rumour had it that the Volunteer Army of the Crimean front had been wiped out and the whole of the peninsula would consequently be occupied by the Bolsheviks in two or three days. The panic had gone so far that some of the people were already packing up intending to leave the place by the first boat just as though the Red troops were even then at the gates of Yalta. They swarmed on board freighters without any accommodation for passengers and occupied places on deck or down in the hold, right in the dirt and dust.

There was one thing which made us officers of the Volunteer Army exceedingly anxious and this was the fact that the Dowager Empress, Maria Feodorovna, was still residing in her small estate a few miles from Yalta where were also living some of the Grand Dukes, uncles and cousins of the late Czar, with their families. Of course there was no question of our leaving the Crimea while any of the members of the Imperial family remained there. Several attempts were made to persuade the Empress to leave the country but Her Majesty persistently refused to go.

When the danger became so palpably imminent she finally yielded and, with the decision thus made, welcomed the timely arrival of the British battleship "Malborough" which had been held in readiness to receive all members of the Imperial family on board. Her Majesty and the other members of the family, among whom was also the Grand Duke Nicholas, the former very popular Generalissimo of the Russian Armies in the first days of the German War, remained until the last moment at their estates and did not come into Yalta. Instead the H. M. S. "Malborough" took the royal families on board off their estates which were situated about ten miles west of Yalta, and afterwards came back and anchored in the harbour because both the Empress and the Grand Duke Nicholas refused to leave Crimean waters until all who might be in danger in the event of the Bolsheviks' arrival should be safely away. So the great warship lay just off Yalta until the evacuation had been completed.

It was so heartbreaking to be compelled to face the fact that our Dowager Empress was forced to leave Russian territory, where she was no longer safe among her own people, on board a foreign battleship, that one could hardly keep back the tears.

All of us who had seen and suffered so much realised the meaning of that great tragedy and feared that, from the morning she stepped on the deck of the "Malborough," she would never again return to Russian soil, vast as it is. However, the fact that she was out of danger was a great relief to every one of us.

As a result of the rumours that the Volunteer Army was leaving the Crimea, the local Bolsheviks became more open in their hostility and impertinence. I received orders from the Yalta Headquarters to act with even greater energy and severity to maintain order in the town and prevent any open outbreak of Bolsheviks. The men of the Port Section rather welcomed the opportunity—the open hostilities afforded them to avenge themselves on the Bolsheviks at whose hands they had suffered so poignantly.

As a result of the thoroughness with which the Port Section put its orders into execution, the Bolsheviks christened me the "White Devil" and thus gave me a name that stuck to me through the remaining service in the Black Sea, and they also offered a large money reward for anyone who would bring to a Commissar the "White Devil's" head.

During these days of increasing difficulties the British ship which remained stationed in the harbour

of Yalta was the destroyer "Sheldrake." As I was appointed liaison officer between the British Naval authorities and the local Headquarters, I learned from the Captain that the Admiral in Constantinople was despatching Allied ships to the Crimean ports for the evacuation of those of the civil population who desired to leave the country. A few days later came another destroyer, H. M. S. "Northesk," appointed to the Yalta station.

Finally it was clear that the Volunteer Army could no longer hold the peninsula and the evacuation was imminent. The British authorities proceeded to make preliminary lists of the people who wished to evacuate to the number of many thousands, including persons of all classes and positions. The evacuations naturally imposed a tremendous amount of work on the Port Section as we were the only ones left to keep order throughout the town and port during these days of disruption and upheaval. Our work was particularly exacting in view of the fact that all sorts of craft were continually entering the harbour bringing stocks of ammunition and arms to equip the local Bolshevik organisations.

One night I was informed by my officers that a Turkish schooner had brought in a large stock of arms and several thousands of bottles of the Turkish aniseed vodka. I at once gave orders to lower five boats and for one officer to take his place in each of them, while I took ten more with me on board the "Krim." Then with this flotilla of six fighting craft I surrounded the Turkish schooner which had dropped anchor in the middle of the harbour.

This was at 2 a. m. so that we took the crew entirely by surprise as we boarded from the "Krim" and did not consequently have to make use of our supporting guns. In a few moments we had roped all the contraband runners and transferred the cargo to the "Krim" and to our small boats.

Just as we had finished and posted a guard of two officers over the crew, we heard a commotion on the jetty, followed by a warning shout from our sentinel there and hurried along to help out if necessary. The British officers were on deck watching the development of events.

The moment I put my foot on the jetty, two revolver shots were fired by some one from a dark corner at the end of the jetty, but luckily they missed me. Turning toward the sound of the shots I could just make out the figure of a man running away and shouted to have him intercepted as I started in chase myself. The British officers who were taking great interest in the excitement, thoughtfully turned the searchlight on the scene and thus enabled us to catch the fellow. After a search revealing incriminating documents proving his connection with a Bolshevik spying organisation among the sailors of the foreign navy, he was shot without further comment.

When I came home that night, fagged and distraught, I found a letter signed by the committee of the Bolshevik fighting organisation, kindly warning me that there would be a Bolshevik rising on the following night in the course of which my house would be destroyed. Knowing the vindictiveness of the beasts, and anxious about my wife and her mother,

especially as I had to spend most of my nights outside on duty, I secured a room for them in a hotel and asked my brother to keep watch before their door.

In the garden of our house I placed a patrol. The night was full of alarms with Bolshevik meetings in nearly every street and I was constantly summoned to all parts of the town with my detachments to restore order. To help relieve my mind I asked the watch officer on the British destroyer to throw the searchlight on the hotel where my wife and mother were sleeping and thus prevent crowds gathering in front of it. Fortunately the night passed without serious incident.

On the following morning the British destroyer, H.M.S. "Stuart," carrying the commanding officer of the 6th flotilla, arrived in port with the news that definite orders had been received for Yalta to be evacuated as promptly as possible and that the Captain of the "Stuart" had been appointed senior officer in charge of the evacuation. Knowing foreign languages, I was appointed liaison officer for the period of the evacuation.

The moment the news became known and the transports began arriving in the harbour, the panic-stricken public started flowing on to the water front and out on the jetty in fright and disorder. Watching them fight to secure places on the jetty, one might have thought that the Bolshevik Army was already at their heels.

The crowd was so enormous that I had to put up gates at the entrance of the wharf zone and station,

strong guards to hold the people back to prevent accidents in the crush. All documents had to be examined at the gate in order to prevent any suspicious individuals from passing, as the Bolsheviks would naturally profit by the general disorder to work their spies through on to the foreign ships. But my men were not sufficient for the task and I had to ask the British Captain to reinforce my platoon with a patrol of sailors to help resist the tremendous pressure of the crowds.

This had the desired effect as the British sailors kept entirely cool and could not enter into any discussions with the public, not knowing their language, but merely carried out orders which were to prevent people from passing under any pretext; whereas my Russians were physically and verbally attacked by the public, who not only argued with them but insulted them when told to stand back. The most troublesome people of all were the Jews. My conscience would not allow me to let through a single Jew before all the true Russians had passed, as I felt that the cause of all the trouble in Russia was due to a Jewish-German combination; when some of these Jews went as far as to offer us bribes to obtain a pass for the evacuation, I tore up their documents and warned them at the same time that, if they appeared at the gate again, I should shoot them on the spot without further ado.

CHAPTER XXVII

BEAUTY SAVES A WOMAN SPY

THE first evening of the evacuation I was summoned by the Captain of the destroyer flotilla and asked:

"Do you know a certain Mme. Braun who is supposed to be living in Yalta?"

"Yes indeed, Sir."

"Well, I have just received a message from the High Commissioner in Constantinople," he continued, "saying that she is not to be taken out on any account as they have information that the lady belongs to a German and Bolshevik spying organisation. Can you recognise her when you see her?"

I said I could and that I would look out for her.

This Madame Braun was a well-known character whom the officers were very anxious to bring to book, as she was looked upon as an agent of the Bolsheviks; and they would never have anything to do with her, although she was an exceedingly pretty woman and was always trying to get into society.

At one of the charity entertainments organised by some society people in aid of the Volunteer Army, a British officer asked Mme. Braun for a dance. While they were dancing many began hissing and a murmur of disapproval passed through the assembly

and all the other dancers abruptly left the floor. Struck by this demonstration the British officer in confusion took his partner to her chair and stood by her side not understanding the cause of this extreme action. But this was soon made clear to him.

The facts were that some time before in the early days of the Volunteer Army, the town where the officers from all parts of Russia who had had the perseverance and luck to escape from the Bolshevik terror assembled, was Novocherkask on the Don. There the first units of the White Armies originated. Besides the officers, there was a great influx of their families and relatives who had lost all their property in Russia and were no longer safe in the Red territory, so that the town was a general gathering place of refugees at the end of 1917 and during the following twelve months.

Nearly all the ladies were members of various societies organised to aid the officers who arrived there in thousands from Central Russia, not only without funds, but destitute and hungry. It happened that Mme. Braun, who, at that time, was in good repute and not suspected of any relations with the Bolsheviks, became a member of one of these societies.

When the pressure of the Red forces drew the newly organised and very small Volunteer Army from Novocherkask into the steppes north of the Caucasus, many officers did not have time to get away with it and were compelled to remain in hiding in the town. Naturally the first thing the Red Army did when it occupied the place was to search out all

the White officers it could find and shoot them. The loyal women who remained continued their help and secretly supplied officers with funds to enable them to flee southward and join the White Army. This was done by means of secret lists, one of which was by more than mere chance in the hands of Mme. Braun. Those lists contained the name, rank, regiment, and hiding place of each officer, and Mme. Braun had secured her copy from the committee for supplying funds to these men. Her possession of it was disastrous, as she turned it over to the Bolsheviks and during the next few days saw them run down and shoot over a hundred of the men whose whereabouts she had disclosed. All these facts about her were brought to Yalta by people who witnessed the tragedy in Novocherkask, so that her appearance in Yalta aroused tremendous feeling and indignation.

I was personally keeping tabs on her in Yalta and was waiting for the chance to catch her in something that might enable me to arrest her and have her punished so far at least as one life could pay for all the suffering she had caused. But she was a clever woman and knew how to behave so that, in spite of my desire, I could not find anything which would justify her arrest. At the same time I felt that it would be taking too much upon myself to seize her merely on what I had heard from other people. So, in view of all this, I was pleased to learn that she was at least to remain in Yalta with the Bolsheviks and not to be allowed to go away.

As I said before, Mme. Braun was a lovely woman, and had extremely attractive features; and

she knew it and took advantage of her beauty in everything she intended to attain. There were many men who knew her history and character and realised that she was a most dangerous individual; and yet, when they met her, after ten minutes' conversation they were so enslaved by her beauty, magnetic charm and cleverness of mind that they forgot all her evil machinations and furiously defended her against her accusers. She was a marvellous but poisonous beauty. There were few people in Yalta who knew her that were not warped in their judgment by her charm. This circumstance made my task all the more difficult.

At my first endeavours to trace her she had been warned by some of her admirers who had come to know my purpose. I spent three solid days trying to find her in Yalta with the intention of arresting her to prevent her from leaving on the Allied ships. Finally, not having been able to trace her and having no more time to spare, I returned to the destroyer and reported that I had given up hope of finding her.

To this the Captain replied:

"Then we must just drop the matter: she may have left Yalta already by some other means. I shall wireless the High Commissioner, meanwhile you go along to the ward room and have dinner and come back afterwards, as I shall be wanting you later in the evening," he said, nodding me out.

As I started to enter the ward room, I stood aghast for a moment and only really came to as I found myself carefully closing the door again and wondering whether the strain of these last days had brought on

mental hallucinations. Wavering between fact and fancy, I went along to the cabin of my wife, who was then living on board for safety, and, not wishing to disturb or frighten her if my head had really gone back on me, I asked her to open the ward room door just a crack and tell me what she saw.

She little knew, as she quietly closed the door, what a sensation of relief and satisfaction she gave me with her ejaculation:

"Mme. Braun! However did she come here?"

I discovered later that she had booked a cabin for herself and her five year old daughter on one of the transports for refugees, the Cunarder "Phrygia," and had come to dinner on board the destroyer, leaving her child asleep in the cabin, as a guest of one of the officers who had met her on the transport.

I asked my wife to return to her cabin and immediately went up to report to the captain on the social standing of his guest.

"I have found her!"

"Who?" asked the captain, who was absorbed in something else, and looked rather annoyed at my interfering with his work.

"Madame Braun, Sir."

"Where in the world is she?" he demanded in a changed tone.

"In the ward room of your ship, Sir."

"Impossible!" ejaculated the captain, dumbfounded at the news.

"I can swear that it is so!" I replied, watching with much interest the expression of the captain's face.

"Then go down and bring her up at once. I want to see her," he said, as he arose from behind his desk.

I went back to the ward room and, going up to the officer sitting on Mme. Braun's left, whispered to him:

"Excuse me, please, but I have just received orders from the captain to ask your guest to come up and see him at once."

Mme. Braun was obviously expecting something to happen because, as soon as I said to her: "Will you kindly come with me to see the captain?" she at once emptied her glass of wine and, apologising to all the officers with a charming smile, rose and followed me without another word, looking as though I had asked her for a dance. I was struck by the woman's sang-froid and dignity.

When we came on deck, the captain had with him the Commandant of Yalta and the Chief of the Garrison. Madame Braun calmly walked up to the captain and asked him in a very dignified manner what he wished to say to her.

"Are you Mme. Braun?" he asked.

"Yes," she answerd, "what is it, Captain?"

"Look here, White Devil," he said, drawing me aside, probably noticing the betraying expression of my face, "you are not going to misbehave to a lady on board my ship!"

"But damn it all, Sir, she is no lady, she is merely a spy and a traitor, and I know what to do with people of that ilk," I retorted.

"That makes no difference," he broke in, "I forbid you to treat her other than as a gentleman should

while she is on this ship where she came as a guest. You may take her ashore at once, and place her under arrest if you like until the evacuation is over, but nothing more. I am senior officer in charge of the Port area, and will not have a woman maltreated in that territory, if I can help it. She will be left behind and, before the last ships leave Yalta, I shall place her in charge of the French Captain who will remain for some time, and he can do what he likes with her!"

I was furious, for I was itching to have justice take its course against this traitor and spy; but the British Captain and my own chiefs had ordered me only to place her under arrest instead of having her shot on the spot, which should have been done in spite of the fact that she was a woman,—and this while the Dowager Empress was a refugee on board a British battleship in that same harbour after all her family had been murdered by the accursed organisation of which Mme. Braun was a member. I had no option but to carry out the orders of the Captain and to ask Mme. Braun to follow me off the destroyer.

Whatever else may be said of her, never in my life have I seen a woman who possessed such self-control as this one. Her composure amazed me. When I was walking by her side along the jetty from the destroyer towards the premises of the Port Section she calmly said to me:

"I am quite aware where you are taking me. You are going to shoot me."

I did not answer. My desire to put her words into execution was so strong that I did not trust myself to

speak. It was only when I led her into one of the rooms of the Port Section building, now her prison, and began myself making up her bed, that she gave way and sank down into a chair and asked for a glass of water, which I gave her.

Then I asked her to hand me her documents and passport and, looking through them, I found that she had secured all the papers and visés necessary to proceed to Constantinople on board the Cunarder "Phrygia." How she had obtained the necessary visés after orders had been issued not to permit her to leave Yalta, I never found out and probably never shall.

At once I sent my brother with two other officers to bring her little girl and their baggage off the "Phrygia," and they were just in time, as the steamer was already preparing to weigh anchor. Only when I gave orders to have her daughter brought, did I notice the paleness of Mme. Braun's face, which bore the marks of the superhuman effort of will she had made not to betray her overwhelming emotions from the time she was arrested to the moment when she at last realised that she was not to be shot just yet. The next day Mme. Braun was placed in charge of the captain of the French ship on the station and we had nothing more to do with her.

Some time later on I saw Mme. Braun walking freely in the streets of Constantinople, and I am not at all loth to believe that the French Captain may have been captured by her charms and have carried her along to Constantinople to continue her extraordinary career.

As I read over what I have written about her, I feel that it were sufficient to end her story here; yet my sense of truth and the dramatic forces me to add a confession and an additional fact. For the first, her name was not "Mme. Braun"; and for the second, I came face to face with her a few weeks ago in the city near which I am living and have listened with mingled feelings to the gossip about her approaching marriage to a wealthy American.

CHAPTER XXVIII

CAST OFF!

AMONG the transports which came to Yalta to evacuate the population was the steamer "Posadnik" belonging to a Russian Company but since the Revolution taken over by the French and flying a French flag. This ship, a properly equipped passenger boat, was intended for the families of the nobility, among whom were several of our relatives. The crew consisted of mixed Russian and French sailors, while the man in charge was a specially appointed French commissioner supposed to protect the refugees.

As I had not much confidence in the character of the crew, I asked the British Captain, to whom I was temporarily attached, to allow me to keep my wife on board the destroyer, where they had so courteously cared for us during these last days, until I could accompany her myself to the "Posadnik." As he still was in need of my services, he allowed us to remain on board and promised to take us in due course as far as Novorossisk.

Later I had cause to be very thankful for having obtained this permission after hearing what happened on the transport. Instead of taking a direct course for Novorossisk the crew, as soon as the

steamer had cleared the harbour, stopped the engines and sent a delegation to the passengers with a message that, unless the refugees paid them at once 100,000 roubles, they would take them back to the Crimean shore and hand them over to the Bolsheviks. The position of the refugees was an absolutely helpless one and the unfortunate people were compelled to scrape together from their last savings this sum which was so brazenly and criminally extracted from them by the crew.

But this was not all. After the money had been paid the crew still did not sail for Novorissisk but first took the ship into Sebastopol which had already fallen into the hands of the Bolsheviks. Once in port the crew demanded that all the passengers on board, women and children included, must take part in coaling the ship. From this work they did not spare anybody, so that my six and seven year old nieces also had to carry sacks of coal along the gangways, while the crew sat watching them, smoking and laughing at their clumsiness.

In the night two passengers, one of whom was my brother-in-law, taking advantage of the darkness, hired a rowboat, boarded one of the Allied battleships, and succeeded in telling the Admiral all about the proceedings of the crew of the "Posadnik." This made the Admiral furious and he at once ordered the captain to proceed to Novorossisk, sending a British destroyer to escort the transport as far as that port.

In the meantime the evacuation of Yalta was coming to an end, but the "Malborough" was still lying

at anchor off the town as the Empress insisted upon seeing all the people and the army safely on board the ships before she would leave.

At last nearly everybody had left the shore and, as soon as a message saying that the last regiment had safely embarked reached the "Malborough," the ships weighed anchor.

All the thousands of men who were watching the scene from on board the ships and the few still left on the jetty, uncovered their heads or stood at salute as the "Malborough" moved and the strains of the Russian anthem, *"Boje Tzaria Khrani,"* sounded for the last time in Crimean waters. The scene was so stirring and pathetic that every face in the crowd was streaming with tears, while many of the women sobbed aloud. It was the funeral of a nation and we were its mourners. Our hearts were breaking at the idea that we officers were forced to witness the departure of our beloved Russian Empress, the mother of our martyred Czar, that she had to flee on a foreign ship to foreign shores from her own former subjects and that we were too few to be able to guarantee longer her safety in her own land. At that moment we felt that everything had come to an end in Russia and that a deep chasm had opened between the past and the future. Russia was lost to all of us and henceforth we were refugees, homeless and countryless, mere vagabonds. There was deep tragedy in the feeling that, with the departure of the "Marlborough," the past was dead forever and with it were buried all our hopes and longing for our long tortured Mother Country.

The giant battleship belched forth great clouds of black smoke and, to the strains of the old anthem, steamed slowly past the Yalta jetty for the last time; then, gathering her speed about her, ploughed the rounding hillock of the Black Sea's horizon and slipped down steadily into that other great western world as a mighty symbol of its power and order that had touched with a rescuing hand the chaos and despair of Red Russia. The crowds remained to the last moment watching in a deep silence broken only by suppressed sobs. The great ship had taken away from us that which we true Russians held most sacred.

The evacuation of Yalta was completed and there was not much work left save the details of the departure of the few ships remaining. The last to leave the harbour were three British destroyers on board which were my two brothers and myself, one on each, acting as interpreters. These destroyers were to pick up the last Russian officers in the administration. Our sailing was fixed for noon the following day.

The Red forces had not yet reached Yalta, but the power in the town had already passed into the hands of the local Bolsheviks, except the port which was still under British control. Three destroyers still lay moored to the jetty and all contact was broken between the town and the port where strong British patrols were guarding the approaches to the harbour section. The place was practically dead and there was little to remind one of the beautiful and gay seaside resort of former days.

For my wife and myself it was exceedingly depressing to realise the necessity of leaving Russia for an unknown period and an unknown destination. There seemed only one hope left for us which was to try somehow to get to Batoum where the British were in occupation and where I still had a small country house.

Feeling an uncontrollable desire to go once more into Yalta, I proposed to my wife that we take a walk to the hotel "Rossia," the largest one in the place and situated on the water front and there drink a last cup of coffee on Crimean soil.

As we passed out of the Port area we met a group of some two hundred stevedores who showed me a definite cordiality. They were neither Bolsheviks nor Monarchists, but were merely enjoying an ephemeral freedom promised to them by Bolshevik propagandists. They urged us not to go into the town saying that it might be dangerous. But there was some strong emotion dictating to my wife and myself and we went on. Before leaving the destroyer I had, however, as a matter of precaution asked that, in case we did not return in one hour's time, they send along a patrol of British sailors to fetch us.

The moment we entered the hotel, we saw we had walked into the Headquarters of the Yalta Bolshevik organisation. I do not know how to account for it, but I had the feeling that there was no danger for us. We passed unconcernedly through a crowd of armed men and, as we continued through the corridor, we noticed that in it there were no less than six machine guns and piles of hand grenades on all the tables and

chairs. At the foot of the stairs we were stopped by a Bolshevik sentry who asked:

"Whom do you want, *Tovaristch*?"

"To begin with," I retorted, "I am no *Tovaristch* of yours; and to continue, I want a waiter who will bring me some coffee."

Our demeanour took all the Bolsheviks present so unaware that they could think of nothing else but to take off their caps and say:

"You are welcome, please come in!"

Thus greeted, we ascended the stairs and sat down at a small table in the dining room. When I summoned a waiter and ordered two coffees, I thought he would faint from astonishment. Under the spell of fear he bent down and whispered:

"Your honour, you must remember that we are now under the Bolsheviks. We have some nasty stuff something like coffee but you must not expect to have any milk or sugar, for these have entirely disappeared from our stock."

"No matter," I said, "bring us two cups of black coffee. I have the sugar in my pocket."

So we had our coffee after all. The waiter was right, it was a transparent, insipid imitation. After swallowing it with difficulty, we paid the bill and made a far less exciting exit from this second Bolshevik Headquarters into which I had inadvertently walked than I made from the first one at Orenburg.

Without further incident we returned to the destroyer that was scheduled to sail at twelve sharp. At that hour the "Stuart" slipped her lines and

headed for Novorossisk, carrying us away from all the trials and struggles of our days in that Crimea which was once the playground and haven of sunshine for all Russia.

CHAPTER XXIX

AU LARGE

AS the destroyer steamed out of the harbour, I was standing on the bridge taking a last look at all the places with which I had been so intimately connected these many months. I noticed that all the men of the Port Section who had refused to embark on any of the transports had collected on board the little steamer "Aloushta," behind which they had the motor launch "Krim" in tow, and were thus prepared to make their exit from the harbour they had so constantly patrolled. As the destroyer passed, they all threw up their caps and gave us a rousing cheer in farewell. They also put to sea a little later making for Novorossisk.

This was for me the beginning of a series of erratic moves up and down the Black Sea which made me a witness to all the pathos and tragedy of the final days of Denikine and Wrangel and of the last vestiges of the old established Russian authority on its native soil. I saw much and could tell much but it is a tale for which I have little heart and for which any reader would probably have less.

Our wanderings took us first into Novorossisk, so jammed with refugees and so fever-ridden that the Captain of the destroyer very considerately refused

to allow us to enter that arena of suffering and carried us back westward with him to Constantinople.

It was about three hours after the "Stuart" had left Novorossisk that our attention was drawn to rather sharp rifle firing in the open sea to the south of us. After a bit we made out the valiant "Aloushta" with my men on board and the "Krim" astern. Seeing those "land pilots" struggling with the sea, I asked one of the British officers how he thought they would come through and had from him the comforting assurance:

"If they don't go down in such a rough sea it will be a miracle!"

But in my own heart I knew that those men would never perish in water or fire. They were men who never allowed circumstances to get the upper hand of them, and I had little doubt but that I should meet them soon again in some other corner of our shifting field of battle.

The next morning at sunrise the destroyer entered the Straights of the Bosphoros and one hour later we anchored off the Sultan's summer palace of "Dolma Bagtché."

After several days in the Turkish capital we were again given passage, through the courtesy of the British authorities, on board the transport "Nile" to Batoum. There, after a short rest in the home of my brother-in-law, I faced the novel problem of finding civil employment in surroundings of order and the normal life incident to British occupation. It was not long before I was given the appointment of interpreter to the British Military Court, which afforded

me five months of incredible peace and tranquillity. It was during these days that our first little daughter was born into a life that seemed so foreign and ill-suited to children and infants; and, to make the confession full, perhaps I should add, to share the Black Sea name of her father. For it was before she was a year old that the Captain of the "Stuart" on which I was making the trip to Constantinople to prepare quarters for my family arriving on the transport, answered a wireless request for my services from another destroyer with the message:

"No, though the W. D. is on board; for the S. D. and the L. D. are on the transport fourteen knots behind us. When he has properly placed them in Constantinople perhaps he will come back."

The patronymic thus carried down to the child in the form of "The Little Devil."

By October of 1919 the Crimea had been re-occupied by the Volunteer Army a sufficient time to offer some hope of a successful resistance or at least to warrant going back into the struggle: so I decided to return again to Yalta to do what I could to help. It was at Novorossisk on this westward journey that I learned of the serious illness of one of my brothers at Kharkoff and decided to hurry back from Yalta by the first steamer after leaving my family there and go to his aid. After unimaginable difficulties of transportation from Novorossisk to Kharkoff I arrived to hear from my cousin the crushing news that my brother had been buried the day before. The only thing I could do was to bid him a last farewell at the grave and return sadly to Yalta.

It was during my journey back to Novorossisk that I saw along the river of mud called a highway such pictures of fleeing peasants and shattered homes as only a Raemaekers could reproduce. Forced by the hopelessness of securing a place on any of the trains for the last section of the run from Rostoff south, I had finally to take to the road myself and bought a horse to ride. Into the melée there had now come thousands of Kalmucks from the steppes of the Don, carting their families in wains and driving their herds before them, knowing neither whither they were going nor whether they should ever return.

It was no help to the congestion and terror of the road to have the Cossack detachments come straggling in, broken and disheartened by the irresistible pressure of vastly superior forces. Riding with them into Novorossisk, I saw among them one of the most tragic and wildest pictures of the chaotic evacuation of the town. From the deck of the destroyer that was waiting to see the evacuation completed before leaving Yalta I watched these Cossacks take leave of their horses, when they found the animals could not be taken with them on board the transports. Most of them were in tears at having to part with these inseparable and faithful friends of the battle field and some of them, rather than see their mounts left masterless and likely to fall into the hands of the Bolsheviks, drew their revolvers and shot them before going on board. In some cases the men emptied a second cartridge into their own heads and dropped by their beasts. One of the Cossacks who had already embarked at the last moment jumped

into the sea to swim back to his horse, which stood neighing on the pier, but did not make the shore.

Back in Yalta I was once more appointed liaison officer for the foreign warships which visited the port and later named as Senior A. D. C. to the Garrison Chief. It was not long before the power of resistance in Denikine's army was reduced to little or nothing and the Crimea filled with its broken units. As the peninsula was becoming overcrowded and there was not sufficient food, the new Commander-in-Chief, General Wrangel, issued orders for evacuation of the population.

Being in close touch through my work aboard the British destroyers with the plans for evacuation and seeing clearly, after all I had gone through in the Yalta and Novorossisk regions, that it was but a matter of weeks before the end must come, I availed myself of the offer of the men I had now come to know so well in the British Navy and once more sailed away with them, this time for the open sea and the open world, chagrined and disheartened at having to leave my native land to the hands of its despoiling fanatics but carrying away those who were the most dear to me, my wife and our one "L. D."

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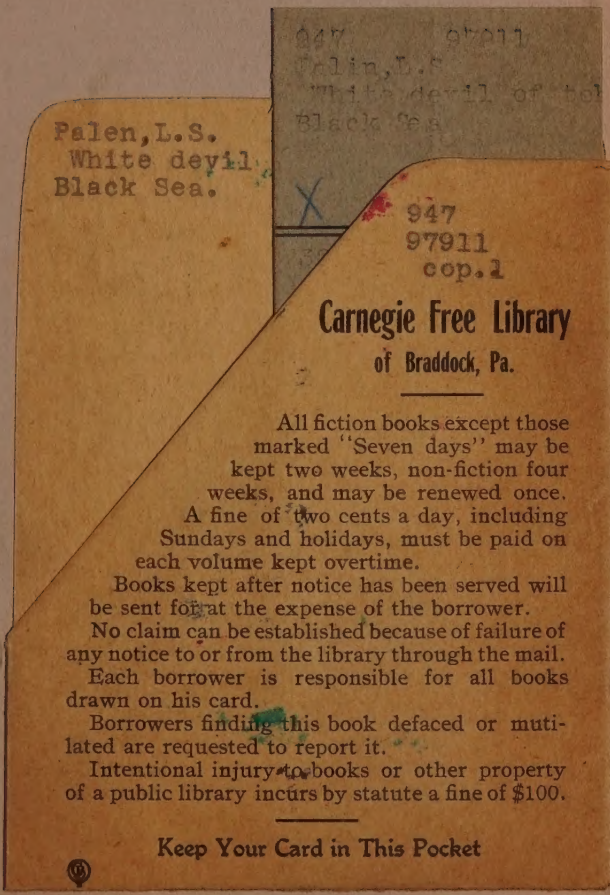

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